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AUTHOR Freedman, Marc
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationships developed between elder mentors and at-risk youth in the following exemplary intergenerational programs: (1) IUE/The Work Connection (Saugus, Massachusetts); (2) Teen Moms (Portland, Maine); (3) School Volunteers for Boston (Massachusetts); (4) Teenage Parent Alternative Program (Lincoln Park, Michigan); and (5) Teaching-Learning Communities (TLC) Mentors Program (Ann Arbor, Michigan). Information was obtained from site visits, a conference, interviews with professionals in the field of adolescent development, a review of the literature on adolescent institutions, and a brief review of intergenerational programming. Summary findings include the following: (1) primary and secondary relationships between elders and youth will form in programs designed for that purpose; (2) primary relationships are characterized by attachments approximating kinship, while secondary relationships maintained more emotional distance; (3) both elders and youth cited benefits from the relationships; (4) the most effective elders were those who had not lived what would be considered "successful" lives; (5) intergenerational bonds form because of shared emotional needs; and (6) programs were most effective when elders were placed in nonprofessional roles, given on-going support, and contact was structured. The appendices include a directory of the programs studied, a list of reviewers and the experts interviewed, and a topic guide used in interviewing the older people. A 75-item list of references is also included. (FMW)

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Partners in Growth:

Elder Mentors and At-Risk Youth

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Partners in Growth:

Elder Mentors and At-Risk Youth

by Marc Freedman

Fall 1988

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CONTENTS Page

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....i

FOREWORD.....ix

I. INTRODUCTION.....1

II. BACKGROUND.....5

III. INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS.....15

IV. BENEFITS TO YOUTH.....39

V. FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS.....47

VI. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS.....65

REFERENCES.....71

APPENDICES.....77

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many at-risk youth are growing up isolated from the range of caring and consistent adult relationships so important for navigating the treacherous course from adolescence to adulthood. An accumulation of longitudinal research suggests that adult relationships--provided not only by parents, but by grandparents, neighbors and other interested adults--are a common factor among resilient children, who achieve success despite growing up in disadvantaged and stressful circumstances. An important, and not often addressed, question for social intervention is whether the circumstances of more at-risk youth could be improved through efforts designed to provide greater access to these relationships.

In the search for new, cost-effective approaches to improving the life chances of at-risk youth, older adults are an intriguing potential source of developmental relationships for these young people. Elders are the fastest growing segment of the population, may be relatively inexpensive to employ, and are in need of opportunities for socially productive activity. There is considerable intuitive appeal to the notion of bringing together these two segments of the population for mutual benefit.

The intent of this study is a fuller understanding of what really happens when elders and at-risk youth are brought together. In an effort to develop this understanding, P/PV staff visited five exemplary intergenerational programs in Michigan, Massachusetts and Maine. During two visits to each site between February 1987 and May 1988, the research team interviewed program staff, elders and youth. Funding for the study was provided by the Luke B. Hancock Foundation of Palo Alto, California, and the Skillman Foundation of Detroit, Michigan.

The five initiatives involve adults in the federal Foster Grandparent program, retirees from several labor unions, and other older volunteers. They seek to aid teenage mothers, jail-bound young offenders, and students in danger of dropping out of school. The programs are IUE/The Work Connection in Saugus, Massachusetts; Teen Moms in Portland, Maine; School Volunteers for Boston; Teenage Parent Alternative Program in Lincoln Park, Michigan; and Teaching-Learning Communities (TLC) Mentors Program in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The report also draws on a conference, extensive interviews with experts and academics, and a review of the literature on adolescence and the condition of institutions that have traditionally moved young people toward adulthood, a digest of views by current observers and actors in the field of adolescent development, and a brief review of current intergenerational programming. It also includes extensive quotations from elders and youth involved in the relationships typically observed. Excerpts from these quotations can be found on pages ii, iv and vi.

Gus Papageorge and Eddie Dillon
IUE/The Work Connection

Gus Papageorge, a former leather worker and bus driver, is a mentor in IUE/The Work Connection, just outside Boston:

These kids, they need adults to teach them; adults with patience; adults who feel about them. They don't want bluffers. They know. Because they can outsmart anybody, because they've been out in the streets so long. They know if you're sincere or if you're faking.

The first thing I tell them, I says, "I'm not a government agent. I'm here for you. Only you. I'm here because I want to do this, because what you're doing is wrong, dead wrong. You'll never make it in life.". . . . They realize what they're doing is wrong. Some of them, they already know. But they don't know how to get out of it, because they don't have any connections. The only connections they got is the same people who started them that way. That's how they got clipped. . . . Most of the families. . . . they've put up with so much from these kids--and these families aren't stable to begin with--they kick them out of the house. . . .

And these kids got no shoes, they're hungry, they live out in the streets, and they try to block everything out by getting drunk or being doped up, because nobody cares. That's my theory on this subject. Give him your telephone number. If he gets in trouble, tell him, "let me know what's happening, maybe I can be a help."

Eddie Dillon, Gus's partner for a year, is a participant in the alternative sentencing program for youthful offenders:

So at first, I felt it was kind of weird. And then I started getting used to him and I opened up to him and he knew where the hell I was coming from. . . . We could talk about anything. Anything. With my family problems, he really helped me out a lot. When I'd be screwin' up, Gus would call on me. He'd come by, play with the kids. He loved the kids. He'd stay over for a while. We'd invite him for dinner. Then a couple times we were down and out, he'd lend us a few bucks. I would never approach him for it, but he'd come out with, "There, go get something for the kids." He was always like that. . . . I trust him more than anybody on this earth. He always makes me feel better, makes me feel like someone cares. If someone cares, then I'm gonna be good. If no one cares, then it makes me not good. . . . Gus never pushed too hard. If he did, I wouldn't have listened. I'm a stubborn guy. If you tell me to do something, I say yeah, okay sweetheart. You know. Not Gus. You know he's been more or less a father to me. He is also kind of a friend. He understands me; maybe because he went through it himself. He's seen something that's made him a wiser man.

The study sought to answer a series of questions and concluded with a sturdy appreciation of the potential of intergenerational relationships for youth at risk of a variety of life disruptions. The questions and the study's answers, briefly stated, follow:

Will intergenerational relationships form?

The study found that bonds between elders and youth will form in social programs structured for that purpose. Despite a sharply age-segregated society and some initial hesitation, the participants were in most cases able to forge powerful bonds. Of the 47 pairs interviewed, 37 constituted significant relationships that provided benefits to both partners.

What do the relationships look like?

The significant relationships divided into two types, primary and secondary; the former are characterized by attachments approximating kinship, great intimacy and a willingness on the part of elders to take on the youth's full range of problems and emotions. In secondary relationships, elders served as helpful, "friendly neighbors," focusing on positive reinforcement but maintaining more emotional distance.

Do they result in benefits for the youth?

Benefits from exposure to the elders appear to exist for all youth in the programs. However, youth in significant relationships consistently cited an improvement in the quality of their day-to-day lives and described learning a variety of functional skills as a result of their alliance with the older person.

Young people in primary relationships reported a further tier of benefits. They described elders helping them weather potentially debilitating crises, bolstering their stability and sense of competence, acting as advocates on their behalf, and providing important access to the mainstream community.

All these relationships appear to help change a life trajectory from one headed for failure, to a more adaptive path of survival.

Are there benefits for elders?

The elders interviewed described meeting their own needs precisely through providing the kind of attention, caring and commitment the youth craved. Beyond simply getting out of the house and earning money, relationships with youth offer elders the chance to pass on skills developed over a lifetime, get a fresh start in a relationship with a younger person, and play the appealing and

Emily Winston and Monique Sanders
T-LC Mentors Program

Emily Winston, a highly educated woman in her early 60s, is a tutor in the T-LC Mentors program in Ann Arbor, Michigan:

She's a big, strong girl and she has a violent temper. And she's far from dumb. She's really quite bright but she doesn't read very well, she doesn't get very good grades, she's got no support at home. . . . It seems like somebody being a friend for her, the way I've been trying to be, gives her a little bit of something. When she's got a problem or something is bothering her she comes down to the mentor center instead of going around kicking or telling off her teacher. She's a perfect example of the kind of kid who's going to end up having a baby or running away or not finishing school or hitting someone so hard it causes serious problems.

I think she gets a sense of security out of this that she does not get with her family. And she wants to--oh, for instance, we just moved to an old house last spring and she's dying to come out and help. She said "I'll do anything." She wants to pursue the relationship but I don't think it's a good idea for her or for any of the other students and me and the other mentors to mix up our private lives with our positions here.

Monique Sanders, Emily's partner, is struggling in junior high school:

I would come down during study hour and basically we'd get down to my math work, and she would help me with it. She would not do it, she would just basically help me. Then when we would get through with the work, she'd tell me I better go take that back to my class, so the teacher could correct it. Then I'd come back and she would show me pictures of birds, 'cause she lives in the country. So she shows me pictures of birds and different animals. You know she loves to sew and I do too. We crocheted. . . .

She's really nice. Like my grandmother, she would always bring me goodies. She'd ask me where are your classes, those kind of things. She asked me how I was doing with my family, how are you getting along? I would tell her we get along fine. . . . She'd look--she'll tell me, she'll say, "Monique look me straight in the eye." And I would look down and she'd say, "No, no, no, look people straight in the eye and tell them." She would know if you were telling the truth or not. She would always want you to tell the truth to her and be honest.

somewhat idealized role of mentor. The role also provides the elders with a challenge: helping youth change their lives. They find the assignment sometimes frustrating, at other moments exhilarating, and always engaging.

Why do intergenerational bonds form?

There is a strong emotional basis--not only among the surveyed participants, but fairly widespread among elders and at-risk youth--for the formation of bonds. Rather than being dependent on "chemistry," these alliances seem to occur when youth are receptive--lonely, at a time of crisis, ready for change and desirous of adult contact--and elders are enthusiastic but also lonely and intent on finding meaningful roles in their senior years.

The elders interviewed felt a special empathy that appears to derive from the marginal status shared by elders and youth in our society. They also appeared attracted to fulfilling the "Elder Function," the propensity of the old to share the accumulated knowledge and experience they have collected. Mentoring ability appears to be more easily expressed in the senior years of age.

Perhaps one of the study's most striking findings is that the most effective elders were individuals who had not lived what would commonly be considered "successful" lives. Many had endured strained family relationships, struggled at low-paying jobs, and battled personal problems, such as alcohol abuse. Partly as a result of surviving--and surmounting--such difficulties, these elders seemed to understand the youth, were able to communicate with them from their own experience, and established strong, constructive bonds.

Can program factors stimulate intergenerational bonding?

The elders' success with the young people appeared to be attributable also to their unique role and to some deft decisions by the five programs studied. The elders' location in an optimal spot--as neither parents nor professionals--left them relatively free from role constraints and untainted by the mark of authority. At their most effective, the programs reinforced these natural advantages by casting the elders in nonprofessional roles, giving them freedom to do their work, providing ongoing support, and structuring contact with the young people so that it was personal, sustained and consistent. Merely adding occasional adult contact to a conventional youth program will not produce the ties and benefits portrayed in the case studies that form the heart of this report.

Mary Dubois and Cindy Burke
Teen Moms

Mary Dubois, a widow who raised several children on her own, was born in northern Maine just after World War I. She is now a Foster Grandmother in the Teen Moms program in Portland, Maine:

I really enjoy being with her. In fact, I wouldn't mind if my son brings home a girl like her to me. She's a very good mother. It shows in the children. She's very attentive to the children. My relationship with her is different than a mother/daughter relationship. I'm too domineering with my own children, but I do not dominate her. I think a grandmother/granddaughter would be much more like it. My daughters are my daughters; she's like a granddaughter, and she needs help. . .

I tell her not to down herself so much. She feels so inferior. She's a pretty girl, to me. She's got an awful lot going for her. She downs herself, says "I have two children." I say you had a bad marriage, it didn't work; that's not your fault. It's just little things to make her feel good, to love herself. . . . I taught that to my children, I teach that to all the girls. They are individuals. They don't have to copy this one or that one. What do you want to do with yourself? I don't teach them, I talk with them about it. They are special. Cindy is a beautiful mother.

Cindy Burke, whom Mary visits each week, is a 20-year-old single mother living on AFDC:

I guess her husband died. It's like she's been through it and it seems like she knows what I am going through. I told her today that I really needed some help about seeing another guy. I am sure she's going to come up with something like she always does. You give her time to think about something and the next week she'll say "you remember when you mentioned this" and you know she'll come out with something. She's really good about everything. . . .

The day that it happened [The suicide of Cindy's boyfriend] she was right over and she gave me a great big hug and asked me if I was alright, and if I was going to be alright, which really helped me out. I really didn't think we were that close until that happened and she was right there. 'Cause I called my dad and he really didn't want to talk about it since he didn't know the person and didn't care about it. So I said 'bye and hung up on him. But with Mary you can talk about it and she's not going to shut you out. That's what my parents have always done to me. If they don't agree with what I say they'll shut you right out and you won't see them for a couple of weeks. They'll just ignore you. Mary comes over every week and no matter what I say to her she's right there still.

DISCUSSION

While much work remains to be done in this field, the study's findings are richly suggestive of the possibilities inherent in the notion of intergenerational relationships for at-risk youth.

First, intergenerational relationships offer a **new role for older people.** From the perspective of elder productivity, the discovery that a variety of elders can help at-risk youth is of great importance. At present, older people have few choices. Many middle-class seniors escape to separatist playgrounds like Sun City, the retirement community Frances Fitzgerald describes in her book, Cities on a Hill; too many others of smaller means are condemned to isolation, idleness and low-level work. Remaining in their communities and working with these young people is clearly a preferred option for a particular segment of the older population. The fact that some of the elders who need the additional income from this type of challenging work may also be well suited for working with disadvantaged young people is especially fortunate.

In fact, the five programs studied are at once programs for youth and programs for seniors, with both benefiting in equal measure. On the policy level, the experience of these programs supports the wisdom of expanding national service opportunities for seniors. Danzig and Szanton draw similar conclusions in their book National Service: What Would It Mean?: "Persons at or beyond the retirement age may have more to give and more reason to benefit from national service than any other age group."

Second, the activities of the five programs studied point to some **alternative directions for social intervention.** They show that it is possible to use unrelated, nonprofessional adults to intervene in the natural world of youth, a sphere usually considered the exclusive domain of friends and family. These programs aspire to do more than provide counseling, social support, role models or professional services; they attempt to seed genuine relationships, ones that in a significant proportion of cases take on the appearance of extended family. By using older adults from the community to fulfill these roles, they contribute to building what is essentially a self-help strategy. It is not surprising that these relationships often take on a life of their own beyond the walls and prescribed activities of the program. The elders give the young people their phone numbers, they take them out to dinner, get them jobs with their relatives, and open up social networks to the adolescents that were formerly closed to them.

A third intriguing possibility suggested by the intergenerational relationships studied is that of a **distinct paradigm for youth development**, an approach that goes beyond the inculcation of academic and employment skills, the proliferation of computer-assisted instruction, and the emphasis on developing competencies so characteristic of many of our efforts to prepare at-risk young

people for the world. Intensive personal relationships with adults are for the most part absent from social programs for youth, and the experience of the young people interviewed suggests that these intergenerational bonds may impart essential skills for surviving in a tumultuous world, where landing on one's feet and developing psychological and social maturity may be just as crucial to achieving long-term self-sufficiency as a firm grasp on the three R's.

These programs, by orchestrating relationships between at-risk youth and seniors, may be offering the young people a chance to acquire tools to develop future relationships with other adults. There is some evidence from other research that close developmental relationships with adults may be a common characteristic of resilient youth, youth from stressful backgrounds who succeed seemingly against all odds. Perhaps these intergenerational programs are offering participants access to resources and opportunities to develop the qualities of resilience that enable some of their peers to navigate successfully out of adverse conditions.

The programs studied offer many lessons for encouraging the development of intergenerational relationships, not the least of which is that it can be done. It is an operationally feasible goal. The models described in this report do not appear unduly complicated, are relatively inexpensive to institute, and may be applicable in a wide variety of settings and systems. Intergenerational programming is a notion with a potent set of natural advantages, and one that may make for appealing policy as well. Further programmatic and research exploration appear fully justified.

FOREWORD

"Gus Papageorge," whom you'll soon meet in this report, is the pseudonym for a retired leatherworker who tries to help youthful offenders find jobs and get established in society. His method is simple and direct: he talks to the kids, spends time with them, opens his own life to them. "Give [the kid] your telephone number," he says. "If he gets in trouble, tell him, 'Let me know what's happening, maybe I can be a help.'"

Gus's views on why youth fail, and his approach to helping them, reflect a natural, common-sense perspective: "My theory on the subject is these kids are smart, [but] they're lacking the supervision, they're lacking the guardians, they're lacking the compassion and love. And that's what throws these kids off kilter. The first thing I tell them, I says, 'I'm not a government agent. I'm here for you. Only you.'"

His formal schooling never went beyond the eighth grade. Yet Gus's solid insights echo conclusions reached by many child development and learning theorists. Hard evidence for such conclusions may thus far elude us, but as Margaret Mahoney of the Commonwealth Fund has argued: "Some critics will be reluctant to accept anecdotal evidence as proof that mentors matter in the positive development of young peoople. But studies of humankind convince me that society is better off when its members take some responsibility for developing individuals in the next generation."

Professionals in our business are particularly inclined to discount such theories in quest of the measurable result. Often, we think far too narrowly in terms of testable program models--some "right" but mechanical admixture of education, work training and competencies whose results we seek to define and quantify. Lost in the equation is the the extraordinary potential of caring human relationships to strengthen, revitalize and expand a youngster's capacity to cope with the world and its demands.

The people and the voices in Partners in Growth are testimony to that potential, and reading the report should leave us feeling somewhat uncomfortable in our reliance on systems, models, components, outcomes, coordination and the like. The case studies, drawn from the few initiatives around the country that seek to foster meaningful relationships between elder citizens and at-risk teenagers, speak vividly of the human dimension and its power to change the trajectory of youngsters' lives. To be sure, the study is not hard evidence; but that, I submit, is a reflection of how little we now know, and of the gulf between common-sense wisdom about how youth develop and the way we design initiatives to help them.

It is a gulf we hope to bridge. Public/Private Ventures has committed itself to sustained work in this area in the years to come. Partners in Growth is a first step in making sense of how social programs can foster developmental relationships for at-risk youth. It suggests new avenues for research and intervention; through them, we will explore the potential such relationships hold, and seek evidence to satisfy advocate and skeptic alike.

Michael A. Bailin
President

I. INTRODUCTION

A great many youth continue to reside outside the mainstream of our society. The most obvious aspect of their plight is the lack of economic opportunity, but their limited access to good jobs is not the whole story. Many disadvantaged youth are growing up without the range of caring and consistent adult relationships so important for navigating the treacherous course from adolescence to adulthood.

This study originated in the search for new, cost-effective approaches to improving the life chances of at-risk youth, approaches that would engage older adults as a source of positive, developmental relationships for these young people. Elders are the fastest growing segment of the population, may be relatively inexpensive to employ, and are in need of opportunities for socially productive activity. There is considerable intuitive appeal to the notion of bringing together these two segments of the population for mutual benefit.

However, enthusiasm for this prospect is quickly tempered by the awareness that we live in a society sharply divided by age, where the generation gap is a familiar phenomenon and where generational equity is the frequent subject of policy debate. Is the appeal of double social utility more powerful than the obstacle of generational tension? Is the notion of intergenerational relationships sound programming or utopian fantasy?

It is hard to know in the abstract. Accordingly, the intention of this study is to move past such theoretical contentions to a fuller, more direct understanding of what really happens when elders and at-risk youth are brought together in a constructive manner. Although intergenerational programming for at-risk youth now consists of only a handful of initiatives, most of them relatively new and small in size, these efforts hold considerable interest as models for future programming and policy.

By talking to participants and program staff at a group of intergenerational initiatives that appear to devote considerable attention to encouraging these bonds, an attempt will be made to answer four basic questions: Will relationships form between elders and youth in a social program structured for that purpose? Will the relationships all look the same or be distinguished in important ways? Will they result in benefits for the youth? And can program factors stimulate their formation and development? These answers should help move the discussion beyond theory to practice, and inform a decision about whether to proceed further with such programs.

The principal subject of this research is the work of five exemplary intergenerational programs engaging older adults to help at-

risk teenagers. These programs are located in Michigan, Massachusetts and Maine and involve adults in the federal Foster Grandparent program, retirees from several labor unions and other older volunteers. They seek to aid teenage mothers, jail-bound young offenders, and students in danger of dropping out of school.

The five initiatives, selected for their variety and potential for replication, are summarized below (see also Appendix A):

IUE/The Work Connection (Saugus, MA)

Created and administered by a local chapter of the International Union of Electrical Workers, IUE/The Work Connection is an alternative sentencing program for jail-bound youngsters between the ages of 18 and 22. These young people find private sector jobs through the program and are supported on a one-to-one basis by older "mentors." The mentors--retired union members, policemen and other members of the community--stay with the young people for about six months, helping them find work, monitoring performance and attendance, and providing personal support.

Teenage Parent Alternative Program (Lincoln Park, MI)

This program, abbreviated throughout as TAPA, engages older women who are participants in the Foster Grandparent Program of Wayne-Macomb Counties, part of the federally funded program administered by ACTION. It operates in an alternative school for pregnant teenagers in the downriver area bordering Detroit. Older people volunteer on a stipended basis 20 hours a week with the teenagers, often in a group setting. They focus on educating the young mothers about parenting and health care for their child and also help take care of the child while the mother is in class.

Teen Moms (Portland, ME)

The focus of this teen parenting program is on preventing child abuse by contacting teenage mothers early and providing long-term support. Older women are often matched with teenagers prior to the birth of their child, and stay with them for as long as their help is desired, visiting the young mother's home one day a week. The seniors provide friendship, counseling and training in life skills. The program is run by the Portland Neighborhood Foster Grandparent Program and is funded through a demonstration grant from the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

School Volunteers for Boston (Boston, MA)

Founded in 1966, this program recruits and places older volunteers in Boston's public schools. Working in classrooms and after school, these volunteers tutor at-risk youth in basic

reading and math skills, and participate in a variety of mentoring programs. Seniors are providing similar services in a number of other school districts around the country, most notably Los Angeles, Dallas, New York and San Francisco.

Teaching-Learning Communities Mentors Program (Ann Arbor, MI)

In this initiative, referred to throughout as T-LC, elders serve as mentors and tutors to junior high school students who are in danger of dropping out. The program was funded initially as part of the National Education Association's Operation Rescue, and is now supported by Ann Arbor's public schools. It stresses the arts, career awareness, personal goal setting, consistent school attendance and educational excellence for participating teenagers. The model is a distillation of many of the lessons learned in earlier applications of educator Carol Tice's T-LC model, which had been run in numerous cities around the country.

The participants in these five programs are almost exclusively at risk: they are either in trouble with the law, single teenage mothers or flunking out of school. The racial composition of the programs varies: Teen Moms and The Work Connection employ white mentors and serve white youth; School Volunteers for Boston and T-LC Mentors have a mix of white and black elders and serve a similar blend of participants; Teenage Parent Alternatives engages older black women to serve white teenagers. The majority of the young people are from lower-income families, though many live in working-class neighborhoods, with some variations across programs. (A small substudy of the Teenage Parent Program in Detroit included a group of black teenagers from inner city Detroit.) The elders are primarily working class and middle class.

The study was conducted from February 1987 through May 1988 and included site visits, a conference, interviews and a literature search. The research team made two site visits to each of the five sites, which are described in greater detail in Chapter III. Visits were also made to a variety of other intergenerational programs, including the Senior Youth Partnership (Sonora, CA), National Urban League/Title V (St. Paul, MN), Parents Too Soon (Chicago), Family Dynamics (Brooklyn, NY), School Volunteers (Washington, DC), Project Joy (Berkeley, CA), "I Have a Dream" (New York), Senior Partners for Youth in Detention (Albany, CA), as well as a variety of youth conservation and service corps programs that engage older adults.

P/PV conducted a conference on intergenerational programs for at-risk youth. The conference was held in New York City in conjunction with Hunter College School of Social Work and the Brookdale Center on Aging and featured presentations by numerous additional programs and figures in the intergenerational field. Interviews were conducted with more than 60 individuals expert in

youth programming, aging and urban poverty (see Appendix B). And the literature review spanned gerontology, psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics and sociology.

The principal investigator and project coordinator for the study was Marc Freedman, a P/PV program officer and special assistant to the president. Also making site visits were Gary Walker, executive vice president; Cathy Higgins, research officer; and Lorne Needle, Gardner fellow. Background research was conducted by Darrell Moore and Sara Brock, student interns from Swarthmore College.

Funding for the study was provided by the Luke B. Hancock Foundation of Palo Alto, California, and the Skillman Foundation of Detroit, Michigan.

The report's six chapters begin by setting the background and rationale for the study (I and II). The middle three chapters present the findings from the field: Chapter III describes the relationships observed, Chapter IV discusses possible benefits associated with intergenerational bonds, and Chapter V presents the factors that seem to affect the formation of relationships. Finally, Chapter VI summarizes the findings of the previous chapters, analyzes their potential implications, and looks at some possible next steps for programming and research.

II. BACKGROUND

Why study intergenerational relationships at all? There are many other possible innovations for at-risk adolescents; why look at this particular combination of resource (elders) and approach (relationships)?

In actuality, the design of this study grew out of a broader interest in the promise of intergenerational programming--out of the recognition that older adults are a vast and untapped human resource that might be applied to helping youth in need. In 1980, 25.5 million people were aged 65 or over; this number is twice what it was in 1950, and half of what it will be in 50 years. At the beginning of this century, fewer than one in eight Americans was 55 or older; by 1984, it was one in five, and by 2010 that number is expected to be one in four *(Pifer and Bronte 1986; AARP 1986)*. In this group, the proportion of healthy and vigorous elders will grow if early retirement continues to expand and health care for the elderly continues to improve.

Studies have shown that many elders yearn to return to productive roles *(Morrison 1986; Rugg 1987; Moody 1988)*. After the trip to Florida and the opportunity to linger over breakfast, many seniors find themselves bored and restless. Many also have a need to supplement their incomes, a fact that has not eluded an increasing number of private sector industries, such as child care and fast food, which are actively recruiting elders for minimum wage jobs *(Philadelphia Inquirer 1987)*. The notion of providing alternative opportunities for elders to work in the community and help youth--particularly ways that draw on elders' accumulated talents and experience--is extremely attractive.

At the same time, studies conducted by P/PV of New York City's Volunteer Corps, which engages at-risk youth to provide service to seniors in their homes and in institutions, showed that often the most important aspect of these efforts was the personal relationships that formed between the seniors served and the youth who were helping them *(Jaffe and Freedman 1987; Branch and Freedman 1986)*. A similar lesson had emerged years earlier from a P/PV project, Ventures in Community Improvement (VICI) *(Public/Private Ventures 1980)*. In VICI's original 10-city demonstration, which engages union journeymen, often retirees, to help train disadvantaged youth and supervise them in community improvement projects, powerful apprenticeship-type relationships were often a striking consequence of the program. In neither case were intergenerational relationships an anticipated and orchestrated objective of these programs; however, both the youth and journeymen interviewed appeared deeply affected by these bonds and desirous of fuller opportunities to develop them.

While this past experience provided considerable impetus for the design of a study of such relationships, the study's agenda came into focus only after a series of test visits to a selection of intergenerational programs around the country. Preliminary observation and discussions with participants and staff at these initiatives confirmed that, whether articulated or not, relationships were at the very heart of what was occurring in these initiatives.

Armed with the hypothesis that relationships are of considerable importance in the maturing process, and that older adults are an effective means for developing these relationships, the study embarked on an extensive search of the interdisciplinary research literature and expert opinion. This investigation disclosed a body of literature and growing interest among policy-makers, scholars and foundation officials, affirming the potential importance of the study's hypothesis. These perspectives, which set the context for the field research, are reviewed in the following section.

TEEN/ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

The concept of "adolescence" is a relatively recent phenomenon. Social historians trace its origin to the beginning of the 20th century--the word was actually coined in 1904--and point to the need at that time to divert young people from a workplace that no longer had much need for them. Adolescence is a period of development and transition. Erikson defined it as a "moratorium" from adult responsibilities, a time when youth try many roles and mature emotionally, cognitively and sexually before assuming the commitments of adulthood. This conception brings with it images of a protected state, but in reality, adolescence can be treacherous (*Erikson 1968*).

It is a time when young people are confronted with a variety of challenges and temptations. As Carnegie Corporation president David A. Hamburg states, it is a time when many adolescents will make "fateful decisions that affect their entire life course," decisions concerning sexuality, alcohol and drugs, smoking, weapons and a variety of other potential hazards (*Hamburg 1987, p.4*). And these decisions will be faced over an increasingly protracted period of time. Biologically, menarche has moved from an average age of 16 in the United States 150 years ago, to a current average of 12 and a half. Economically, entrance into the workplace and the responsibilities of adult life, as well as the end of dependency, have been pushed back further and further. Many young people, especially those at risk, don't find a spot in the world of work until their mid-20s.

While confronting difficult choices, adolescents not only get a moratorium from adult responsibilities but often are excluded from much adult contact and guidance. The isolation of adolescents, within themselves and from other age groups, is chronicled by a number of observers of adolescence, including Joan Lipsitz in Growing Up Forgotten *(Lipsitz 1977)*. A number of other studies--most notably the volume written by sociologist James Coleman for the President's Science Advisory Committee, Youth in Transition and educator Michael Timpane in Youth Policy in Transition--echo the perspective that youth, especially at-risk youth, are growing up in an age-segregated environment, deprived of adult contact *(President's Science Advisory Committee 1973; Timpane 1976)*.

According to historians, the teenage years were not always this way *(Michael Katz 1974)*. Three generations ago, our society was far more integrated, a point made by Carnegie president Hamburg in his essay Preparing for Life: The Critical Transition of Adolescence:

> Children had abundant opportunity for directly observing their parents and other adults performing the adult roles that they would eventually adopt when the changes of puberty endowed them with an adult body and capabilities. The skills necessary for adult life were gradually acquired and fully available, or nearly so, by the end of puberty. In adolescence now, there is probably more ambiguity and complexity about what constitutes preparation for effective adulthood than was ever the case before *(Hamburg 1987, p.4)*.

Specifically, the institutions that might provide adult contact for adolescents today--the home, the school and the workplace--are either not designed to or less able to do so than in the past. Each is discussed below:

Home. Over the past half century, households in this country have become increasingly private, nuclear enclaves. Joan Lipsitz describes the process of progressive isolation and its impact on youth growing up without a multiplicity of adult models and relationships:

> Adolescence is more difficult for the family and the child today. Before, there were more helping hands available in the home and in the community. As the American family developed, it shed in-laws, grandparents, cousins, aunts, boarders and retainers. It handed production over to offices and factories, religion to the churches, the administration of justice to the courts, formal education to the schools, medical attention to the hospitals. It has been stripped down to the bare frame of being marriage-centered and child-

> fulfilled. Today, the nuclear family, with "occupants" living next door instead of neighbors, is on its own *(Lipsitz 1977, p.160)*.

Actually, as family historian Tamara Harevan has shown, the extended family in American society never really existed, at least in the sense of three generations coresiding in the same household. The biggest difference between the earlier part of the century and the present is rather the loss of unrelated adults that many families took in: boarders, lodgers, apprentices, servants. These households offered adolescents a variety of adult figures whom they observed, interacted with and could emulate. Two generations ago, half the households in the United States had at least one other adult beside the parents in residence--today, less than five percent do *(Lipsitz 1977, p.159)*.

The other major change, of course, is the incidence of single-parent families. Not only have these units shed unrelated adults, but they are losing related adults, in particular fathers, at an unprecedented rate. In many households the number of significant adults has dropped by 50 percent: from two to one. Additionally, geographic mobility has made connections with other households and relatives considerably more difficult.

All this converges on a simple fact: if a young person rejects the parents or refuses to accept their authority, he or she may be left in the position of traversing adolescence without any primary adult relationship.

Schools. Perhaps more than any other institution, the schools have assumed the socializing functions formerly held by the family. However, the focus of these institutions on cognitive development leaves them poorly prepared for the socializing task. Furthermore, in a great many places they have become dreary, bureaucratic and alienating environments that fail not only to develop these young people cognitively but to introduce them into the mainstream society as well.

Socialization is also limited by the fact that schools are age-segregated institutions: adolescents are not only segregated from adults, but even from slightly younger and slightly older youth *(Greenberger and Steinberg 1986)*. This structure facilitates the specialization of curriculum, but severely inhibits developing broader experience. Few adult models are available, especially from the older generation. Studies by education scholar Joseph Galbo show that students rarely select teachers as significant adults in their lives *(Galbo 1983; Galbo 1986)*. And counseling ratios in most urban areas are in the vicinity of 600 students to a single counselor.

Work. When James Coleman and his colleagues on the President's Science Advisory Committee issued the Youth in Transition report in 1973, they called for greater work opportunities for young people, arguing that the lack of socializing influence by adults in the family and schools could be overcome through increasing work opportunities for youth. They seemed to envision a return to conditions often associated with the apprenticeship system, where the journeyman would not only teach a trade but in many cases usher the young person into adulthood. Coleman and his colleagues, writing in the wake of the 1960s, were much troubled by what they perceived as the "inward lookingness" of young people, and the predominance of youth culture.

However, the confidence these experts placed in the workplace as a location for meaningful adult contact appears to be unfounded. In their book, When Teenagers Work, Greenberger and Steinberg argue convincingly that the Coleman group did not understand the nature of the adolescent workplace:

> The work environments inhabited by young people today have not served the age-integrating function envisioned by most proponents of early work experience. The reasons seem clear enough once one looks beyond the generalized "workplace" referred to in the various commission reports and focuses instead on the actual settings in which youngsters work. It matters very little that adults are present in the "workplace" if work environments themselves are highly age segregated *(Greenberger and Steinberg 1986, p.198)*.

Greenberger and Steinberg go on to explain that most adults in the workplace are simply not available to socialize youth. Adults don't have informal contact with young people in the highly structured and time pressured job circumstances that characterize the adolescent workplace, and tend to have little interest in playing developmental roles in these settings. Furthermore, the authors find that:

> In the new adolescent workplace, . . . adolescents' work supervisors often are only a few years older than their employees and seldom see their workers outside of work, partly because the mobility of the young has made possible their employment in neighborhoods away from home. The new adolescent workplace is clearly not providing opportunities to break down age barriers in any meaningful sense, nor is it helping to integrate youngsters into adult society *(Greenberger and Steinberg 1986, p.199)*.

As serious as this problem of age isolation is for middle-class adolescents, it is even more hazardous for at-risk youth. These young people are more isolated, and for longer periods of time,

from the job market and educational institutions, from which they drop out at high rates. The isolation of low-income neighborhoods--where relatively few working adults reside, where youth gangs are especially strong and where the perils of substance abuse take an enormous toll--leave these at-risk young people in greater danger and with fewer supports than their counterparts in more affluent circumstances. And, the stress experienced by low-income families, especially single-parent families, greatly increases the difficulty of providing support.

In The Truly Disadvantaged, William Julius Wilson argues for contact by at-risk youth with adult models in the working and mainstream worlds. Wilson points to the departure of black middle- and working-class families from the ghetto over the past generation--an expression of economic progress and improvements in housing opportunities--and contends that these urban neighborhoods are more isolated by class and race than ever before: "The very presence of these families . . . provides mainstream role models that help keep alive the perception that education is meaningful, that steady employment is a viable alternative to welfare, and that family stability is the norm, not the exception" *(Wilson 1987)*.

THE LESSONS OF OBSERVATION AND RESEARCH

As relationships between adolescents and adults are growing scarcer, many experts feel that it is "common wisdom" that a multiplicity of adult relationships are an essential ingredient in helping youth acquire genuine self-sufficiency.

This perspective is supported by a variety of observations and studies. A recent example can be found in Bernard Lefkowitz's Tough Change. Interviewing some 500 at-risk youth for the Ford and Clark Foundations, Lefkowitz found that caring adults were an important factor for the youth who survived the streets and went on to lead successful mainstream lives:

> The intervention of a concerned adult cannot solve all the problems confronting poor families and their children, but what long-term intervention can do is establish a relationship based on sympathy and trust. The youngster has found someone who is willing to invest time and effort in his future. Now there is someone the young man or woman can be accountable to *(Lefkowitz 1986, p.130)*.

Lefkowitz goes on to cite the experience of Project Apex, an initiative run in 1965 by New York University for a group of youth from Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant who had finished in the bottom third of their high school classes. They were sent through an intensive summer program with some of NYU's best faculty, and were provided intense supervision and attention.

Three-quarters of the kids went on to get through NYU. Lefkowitz quotes the opinion of Professor William Kornblum, who ran the social sciences part of the program, that personal relationships were key to this success: "It was the mentoring notion: 'Someone cares about me, someone who won't let me fuck up'" *(Lefkowitz 1986)*.

Two decades later, similar conclusions are emerging from Eugene Lang's "I Have a Dream" project in East Harlem. Lang, a multimillionaire industrialist in his late 60s, returned to his old elementary school to deliver the commencement address to 61 black and Hispanic students in 1981. These students were going on to high school in a neighborhood where the dropout rate is well in excess of 50 percent. After starting with a conventional speech, Lang changed in mid-course, making the students an offer to pay for their higher education if they graduate from high school and enroll in college. Remarkably, six years later, 48 of the 51 who remained in New York have received their diploma, and about half of these students are enrolled in college.

While much attention has been accorded Lang's scholarship offer, in reality students attribute their success to the deep and sustained concern of Lang and Johnny Rivera, a young social worker who remained with the group as a guardian angel and advocate for the full six-year period. The students say it was the consistency and commitment that mattered, much more than money, tutoring or media attention *(Freedman 1987; Youth Action Program 1986)*. Lang himself has downplayed the monetary aspect of the program and refused offers from potential corporate sponsors interested in just putting up money without making the personal investment of time. He is convinced that the personal commitment is at the root of the project's success; Lang states convincingly, "This is what a little bit of caring can do" *(USA Today 1987)*.

Lefkowitz and Lang have been joined over the past few years by a chorus of influential policy-makers, scholars and foundation officials endorsing the developmental promise of establishing relationships with youth. Carnegie's Hamburg makes this point in Preparing for Life:

> There is a crucial need to help adolescents acquire durable self-esteem, reliable and relatively close human relationships, a sense of belonging in a valued group, and a sense of usefulness in some way beyond the self. To shape these fundamental attributes in growth-promoting directions requires constructive models, mentors, and mediators *(Hamburg 1987, p.10)*.

Several years earlier Margaret Mahoney, president of the Commonwealth Fund, authored an influential essay that made the case for expanding the incidence of mentoring for at-risk youth:

> So many young Americans today do not have the natural proximity to caring, mature adults or the drive to seek them out. . . . This tide must be stemmed, and I believe that it can in part be done, by enlisting individuals to serve voluntarily as mentors to youngsters who, with consistent support, will make it--through school, into a job, and into self-reliance *(Mahoney 1983, p.4, 6)*.

Jane Lee Eddy, executive director of the Taconic Foundation, writes that her foundation's experience and involvement with youth programs has contributed to a robust appreciation of the importance of relationships: "Relationship per se has long seemed to us to be the key to genuine growth and development of at-risk youth" *(Eddy 1987)*.

The manifesto for the importance of adult relationships in youth development was written nearly two decades ago by Cornell professor Urie Bronfenbrenner. In his treatise, Two Worlds of Childhood, Bronfenbrenner compared child rearing in the United States and the Soviet Union, finding our system wanting in the areas of social and moral development. Citing the influence of urbanization, child labor laws, the abolition of the apprentice system, commuting, centralized schools, the working mother, the seductive influence of television, and the professionalization of child care, Bronfenbrenner concludes that youth today have little meaningful contact with adults: "In short, we are coming to live in a society that is segregated not only by race and class, but also by age," and calls for social policies that will allow the most important potential adult influences in the life of young people to realize their potential *(Bronfenbrenner 1970, p.100, 141)*.

Bronfenbrenner's contentions are supported by a group of psychologists and psychiatrists who are studying resilient youth, young people from at-risk backgrounds who, seemingly against all odds, manage to forge successful and self-sufficient lives. Norman Garmezy of the University of Minnesota has found that social support systems are critical in the development of stress resistance among these youth. Garmezy and Dr. Michael Rutter, of the Institute of Psychiatry in London, have found that while good parent-child relationships in early childhood make it more likely that children will develop high self-esteem, adolescence offers a chance to catch up, a turning point "whereby success in the form of personal relationships or task accomplishment may change the life course onto a more adaptive trajectory" *(Rutter 1987, p.328)*. Rutter makes the point that these bonds can improve self-esteem throughout the life process: "It appears that good

intimate relationships, even in adult life, can do much to bolster people's positive concepts about themselves and their worth in other people's eyes" *(Rutter 1987, p.328)*.

One of the most compelling arguments for the importance of relationships is emerging from longitudinal research currently being conducted by Emmy Werner, a psychologist at the University of California-Davis. Werner is directing a study of 700 children born on the Hawaiian island of Kauai. All of these children were born in extreme poverty to parents who labored at local sugar and pineapple plantations. In most cases, one parent was either alcoholic or mentally ill; over the years many of the youth showed signs of mental disturbance.

Using data from the first 30 years of the lives of these children, Werner and her colleague, Ruth S. Smith, found that the youth who succeeded showed an ability to locate an adult in addition to their parents who could help them cope with the world:

> Without exception, all the children who thrived had at least one person that provided them consistent emotional support--a grandmother, an older sister, a teacher or neighbor. These are the kids who are good at recruiting a substitute parent who is a good model for them *(Werner 1982; Goleman 1987, p.C1,11)*.

While Werner's study emphasizes the resilience of the youth--including an innate ability to find helping elders--it may be that making those elders easier to find, or actually providing them, might have the same impact on at-risk youth who are not yet resilient.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Despite the welter of research and opinion, social programs have generally avoided becoming deliberately involved in developing relationships for disadvantaged youth. Part of the reason is fear of interfering with the family's domain of natural relationships. Another is concern with the elusiveness of relationships, which deny being easily controlled.

As a result, social interventions during the past decade have emphasized the development of "hard" competencies--basic academic skills, pre-employment skills and the like--and the construction of systems aimed at streamlining and coordinating service delivery. While both of these aims are admirable and necessary--and have the distinct advantages of allowing for standardized implementation and short-term quantitative measurement of change--they do not address an important category of need.

A number of initiatives that have experimented with the formation of mentoring and other adult relationships for youth have had more success instituting the trappings of these relationships than the substance. The mentoring component often has the feel of afterthought, an addition grafted onto the program model. There is often a gulf between the language touting the relationships and the small print indicating that mentor and mentee get together once a month for 45 minutes.

P/PV studies of such mentoring programs have found them wanting. A study of one, Career Explorations, states: "So vague is the concept that . . . both the participants and the adults themselves had difficulty distinguishing between mentors and other supervisors" *(Public/Private Ventures 1984, p.60)*. A study of Atlanta's adopt-a-student program revealed that adults and youth were required only to attend eight Saturday sessions on job readiness together, and found the frequency of contact sharply limited *(Public/Private Ventures 1987)*. A third study, of the City University of New York/New York City Board of Education Mentoring Program, found this effort to be "a limited program that, at best, provides an added degree of counseling to some participants" *(Public/Private Ventures 1987, p.127)*.

In examining the landscape of social programs for youth it becomes clear that providing genuine, developmental relationships for youth has seldom been seriously tried, despite considerable reason to believe that this approach might offer a promising strategy. At present, a national demonstration, Career Beginnings, includes a mentoring component, but it is too early to know much about its performance. Few intergenerational programs attempting to forge relationships have been studied.

III. INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

This chapter outlines the study's methodology and presents its findings on the nature and development of intergenerational relationships in five exemplary programs that bring together elders and at-risk youth. The findings are based on interviews with 97 elders and youth, including 47 intergenerational pairs, who participated in the programs. The focus here is on two questions that must be addressed before discussing potential benefits to youth, program decisions or policy concerns, as the ensuing chapters will do.

First, will real relationships--ones that fit our understanding of what constitutes a significant bond between two individuals--form between elders and at-risk youth in social programs? There is a need to look more closely at what really happens when contact is structured between interested elders and youth at risk of failing to move constructively into adulthood.

Second, if relationships do form, what do they look like? Are they all the same? Are they all different? Are some meaningful distinctions possible? Claims and terms abound in this area: relationship, mentor, role model, teacher, supporter, challenger, counselor, advocate and mediator are some of the descriptors invoked interchangeably by programs and scholars. A recent editorial in the Journal of Negro Education defined a mentor as "anyone who functions in an advisor/guiding role as a protector, benefactor, sponsor, champion, advocate, supporter, or counselor" (*Cooper 1987, p.157*). On the other hand, it is equally unhelpful to refer generically to relationships, or to use the term mentoring to conjure up a wide span of affective arrangements. Consistent and usable distinctions are prerequisite to further study and program development.

METHODOLOGY

In order to answer these questions, the older and younger individuals included in the study all participated in in-depth, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. These interviews were conducted privately between the P/PV researcher and the elder or youth. They took place in a variety of settings--in empty school classrooms, private living rooms, program offices, at the workplace--wherever the individuals were available and a quiet spot could be found. The interviews ranged in length from 15 minutes to two-and-a-half hours; many were tape recorded with the consent of the interviewees. The topic guide can be found in Appendix C.

Through the interviews, details were gathered about the history of the relationship; the activities the participants engaged in, both as part of the program and out of its confines; the things they talked about, in particular, personal issues; the frequency,

intensity and continuity of contact; their initial attitudes and the evolution of these perspectives; and their perceptions of the nature, role and value of the intergenerational contact.

In determining the existence of relationships and distinguishing between them, particular attention was devoted to five questions: How close are these individuals? How attached are they to each other? How much mutual trust do they share? How much are they enjoying this relationship? How important is it in their lives? The objective was to develop an understanding based on listening to the perspectives of participants, with special emphasis placed on the young peoples' responses to these queries. The adolescents were asked to explain and support their answers--essentially, to make a convincing case for what they were communicating. Following each interview, the researchers decided whether the relationship in question exhibited personal closeness, attachment, trust, enjoyment and importance, the collection of traits commonly associated with constructive and significant bonds.

These distinctions are substantive and affective. A deliberate effort was made not to confuse intention or role with emotional content, as is often done in looking at mentoring. An attempt was made to establish consistent distinctions, independent of how the relationships are portrayed by the programs. It must be noted, however, that despite a systematic approach applied consistently across programs, this analysis is subject to certain limitations. The interviews were conducted at a single point in time, although at different stages in the relationships--a strategy that permitted developing knowledge about a relationship's life course. The researchers' perspectives were founded on their impressions of participants, although these perspectives were leavened by those of staff and by observations of the partners in action. And the number of participants interviewed was, in absolute terms, quite small as well as diverse in age and circumstances. Lastly, it is possible that we witnessed a disproportionate collection of promising relationships at each program, despite efforts to achieve a representative selection of partners.

All of these caveats qualify the precision of the findings throughout the report. However, they do not invalidate the insights. Clearly, much more research needs to be done, and our objective here is to be suggestive, not definitive; to offer some appreciation of what exists and is possible between elders and adolescents in these initiatives, and to advance a way of conceptualizing intergenerational relationships. It is our hope that these findings will prepare the ground for fuller ethnographic and evaluative treatment of these efforts.

FINDINGS

Significant relationships formed between older adults and at-risk youth in the five intergenerational programs studied; of the 47 pairings examined, 37 were significant. Within the category of significant bonds, the study identified two distinct types of relationships, distinguished not only by level of affective feeling, but also by being, in actuality, different types of relationship. They vary not only in degree but in essence.

One group which exhibited consistent evidence of personal closeness, attachment, trust, enjoyment and importance were classified as secondary relationships; another group, which not only exhibited these traits but displayed them in highly developed form, were identified as primary relationships. Conversely, those matches lacking the qualities of significance elaborated above, were classified as non-significant relationships. Of the 37 significant pairings discovered, 16 were determined to be primary relationships, and 21 secondary relationships. Ten pairings were defined as non-significant; these matches never achieved a level of attachment or affinity that would characterize them as primary or secondary relationships. The individuals held each other at bay, and any orchestrated interaction broke down quickly either in frustration or lack of interest.

In addition, since many of the elders interviewed were working with at least two other adolescents, and in some cases as many as six or seven, impressions of a wider sample of pairings were also available. These impressions were further expanded by the perspectives of program operators and staff. The balance of perspectives confirmed that a mixture of primary and secondary intergenerational relationships was common, and complemented the knowledge derived from interviews with the elders and youth paired.

The following sections introduce cases that represent the typical range of individuals and relationships observed. They are presented principally because they are representative, indicative of all the primary and secondary relationships encountered by the researchers. While some of the individuals are remarkable men and women, to be sure, even these participants are typical of the group of exceptional people participating in all the initiatives.

Primary Relationships

Three primary relationships will be described below, principally through the words of the elders and youth: Frances Matthews and Steve Jackson of the T-LC Mentors Program in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Gus Papageorge and Eddie Dillon of the IUE/The Work Connection

program outside Boston; and Mary Dubois and Cindy Burke of the Teen Moms program in Portland, Maine.[1]

Frances and Steve (T-LC)

Frances Matthews lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in a house she owns. She is in her late 60s, a widow, white, and the mother of three grown children. For 18 years, she worked as a technician at the University of Michigan hospital. Earlier, she had aspired to be a practical nurse and enrolled in nursing school, but was expelled because of a disagreement with a teacher. The teacher would not relent and Frances watched her dream of a nursing career go out the window. Although this setback left her in a job that was often less than stimulating, she is an energetic person who has maintained a great love for learning. Frances is now enrolled in a local community college, where she is pursuing an associates degree in liberal arts part time.

Frances joined the T-LC program after retirement from the hospital, hearing about it through an advertisement in an AARP journal. With her husband dead and her children out of the house, Frances finally had an opportunity to go back to school, but she also wanted to help other people. Working with junior high school students gave her a chance to combine a love for history with a chance to volunteer: "I was retired and I had to do something with my life besides just go to school. . . . When I saw that chance to tutor, I thought now there's something that I could do."

Frances was attracted to the idea of working with adolescents; "I can deal with a kid over 12, but I have a hard time dealing with anybody under that. . . . I don't know why. I think it's the sense of reasoning within a little kid, it's too small."

Steve Jackson is a 15-year-old student in the eighth grade at the Scarlett Junior High School. He is black and lives in Ann Arbor public housing with his mother, younger brother, sister and sister's boyfriend. His mother is ill with diabetes and has lost interest in life. Steve is tall for his age, soft-spoken and awkward. He has been struggling academically at Scarlett and trying hard to hold his family together at home, where he is responsible for all the household work. Steve's brother, too, has been struggling in school and Steve has been trying to help him. His sister isn't around very much, and when she is she spends all her time with her boyfriend. There is strain at home.

Steve's grandmother, a retired schoolteacher, used to live with the family, but now spends most of her time away from Ann Arbor.

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[1] The names of all older and younger participants have been changed to ensure their privacy.

When his grandmother was around, they did not get along particularly well: "She used to watch over me and my sister. I was about as close with her as I am with my mother, which is to say we're not all that close. . . . It's hard to explain. She [his grandmother] has strict rules. Her attitude is don't let them get away with anything; punish them!"

Steve met Frances at a time when he "wasn't doing my homework . . wasn't doing nothing in school." His history teacher encouraged him to try the T-LC program, and he was matched with Frances, who was also new at the time. They proceeded to meet every Wednesday for a year in a private part of the Scarlett School library, along with another student, Sharon Pitts, a friend of Steve's.

Frances spent a lot of time trying to infect Steve with her love of history, and to make the discipline less intimidating:

> I always liked history, but I'm no teacher. But that's okay. If you can help a kid, if they understand where you're coming from, they realize that you're not a teacher but you're only here to help them and sort of point out the why's. Then they can really relax and respond. . . . Not being a teacher I never say you're wrong, I just encourage them to try a different approach.

Under Frances's tutelage, Steve moved from a D to an A in history during the course of the year. But this academic progress was not primarily a matter of drilling. According to him:

> I figured that she was just going to be a tutor, but she turned out to be more like a friend. She said I'm here to help and I hope we can be friends. We didn't always talk about school work. She kind of, you know, if we had problems or something we could talk to her about it. . . . She told us about herself so we could get to know each other. She said you can help me and I can help you. . . . It was fun because, you know, I had a couple of problems at home with my brother. We were talking about that. She was sort of like an outlet.

In addition, Frances spent a lot of time encouraging Steve to try hard at school and think about future possibilities:

> He said I'd like to go to college but I couldn't. I said why not? He was a little startled. . . . I said you can go to college if you want to. It won't be easy. There are ways you can earn money to go to college. So I gave him a little bit of hope, you know, not a lot but a little insight that it's not an impossible situation.

Rather than push Frances away, Steve took her advice to heart, about school as well as coping with his family problems:

> Well it was real sensible advice; she told me don't take things to extremes. . . . She's kind of mellow about things. I suppose she told me not to get so mad--I used to get angry with my mother and stuff. . . . I think it's very helpful because she kind of motivated me to do more schoolwork, especially in particular classes. . . . She kind of made it interesting, you know. She kind of had a story to go along with the lessons. . . . And, like I said, she was just there for me when I had any problems. She said if you get into anything, you can call me. . . .
>
> I don't look at Frances as, you know, an older person. The first impression I got from her was that she seemed more like a teenager than an older woman.
>
> She doesn't make you feel like you're a three-year-old and you need to be told what to do and how to do it. Being with her was like getting practice being an adult.

During the summer, Frances invited Steve and Sharon to an art exhibit, then to lunch and then back to her house, in an effort to expose them to her life and make it seem real to them:

> I had told the kids that we would have lunch one day during the summer. An art fair was on in July so I called them and told them if they were free we would go have lunch on Friday. I said you guys have to pick the restaurant--no fast food though. . . . If you show children that there is a better way than standing on the street corners by letting them come to your place--to a regular house with a backyard in a different neighborhood--you're exposing them to something better. . . .
>
> It was fun, it was really fun. It's like helping a sick person get better because you can see this gradual change. . . . With a little bit of encouragement and a little bit of interest from somebody else, a young person like Steve can get caught up and make the grade.

Gus and Eddie (IUE/ The Work Connection)

Gus Papageorge lives in a working-class neighborhood outside of Boston. A passionate man who is now retired, Gus has had a hard life, physically and emotionally. Born in Greece, his entire family of 24 was slaughtered during World War II; he lost both his mother and sister within two weeks. He made it to the United States, working under extremely difficult conditions in the

leather factories of New England. After years in the factories, Gus worked at a succession of odd jobs, including barber and school bus driver, before retiring. In addition to this work, Gus plays the bouzouki and has led a Greek band for 26 years.

Gus was married and divorced earlier in his life, and although he had one child, repercussions from the divorce have prevented him from having much contact with his daughter, which he bitterly regrets. Gus has also suffered some bouts with alcoholism, and at the time of the interview was recuperating and on leave from The Work Connection.

Gus learned about The Work Connection in 1985 through a cousin who was working in the program's office. He joined because he felt he could be "a good father"; since that time he has mentored many participants, as many as six or seven at a time. His approach to helping youth, all of whom have been convicted of a crime and are in danger of being sentenced to jail for the first time, is based on intense commitment and using his own life troubles as a basis for appealing to the young people:

> I try to make them [the youth] see that they can't survive the way they've been doing things, and to convince them that in this country, they can be anything they want, if they really try. . . . [I know what it's like] not to have any supervision in life, to bounce around, and feel that you are nobody's kid. I try to make them realize that it matters what they do with their lives. . . . I see them at least twice a week. Once at work, once at home, or someplace else. Many times, I see them more than that. . . . If you show up in court, they feel secure when they see you there. Sometimes I'll get up and say something to the judge on their behalf. It's like being a father, or a brother; I really get attached to them.

Eddie Dillon is in his early 20s. He is white and comes from a low-income area outside Boston. Like Gus, he has had a life of trouble. Both of his parents are dead, his mother dying shortly after Eddie received a suspended sentence on drug charges. Unmarried and the father of two children, neither of whom lives with him, Eddie has had a succession of unhappy romances. He is terribly lonely, still plagued by drugs and alcohol, and fighting hard to preserve his sanity. He lives in a motel room off Route 1, and works on and off in manual labor jobs for "under the table" pay.

Gus came into Eddie's life after a judge agreed not to send him to jail if he would promise to participate in The Work Connec-

tion. At first Eddie was apprehensive about working with an older man, but agreed because it meant avoiding incarceration:

> So at first, I felt it was kind of weird. And then I started getting used to him and I opened up to him and he knew where the hell I was coming from. . . . We could talk about anything. Anything. With my family problems, he really helped me out a lot. We'd talk about money at first. And with my girlfriend, the mother of my child, I was trying to get Gus to help get us back together. And he did. And he said I can't be doing this all the time, getting involved in the family. "You love each other, but you're both stubborn," he says. So Gus talked to her and he calls me up--and I was really in a state of depression. I had to go to Mass General Hospital, to psychiatrists, I mean, I was doing the pills. I wanted relief so bad. . . . Gus helped us move, he gave us the car keys, and he'd be coming up every other night to see me on his own; picking me up at the job interviews. He is one of the best guys I've ever met. When I'd be screwin' up, Gus would call on me. He'd come by, play with the kids. He loved the kids. He'd stay over for a while. We'd invite him for dinner. Then a couple times we were down and out, he'd lend us a few bucks. I would never approach him for it, but he'd come out with, "There, go get something for the kids." He was always like that. . . . I trust him more than anybody on this earth. He always makes me feel better, makes me feel like someone cares. If someone cares, then I'm gonna be good. If no one cares, then it makes me not good. . . . Gus never pushed too hard. If he did, I wouldn't have listened. I'm a stubborn guy. If you tell me to do something, I say yeah, okay sweetheart. You know. Not Gus. I respect the guy very much. You know he's been more or less a father to me. He is also kind of a friend. He understands me; maybe because he went through it himself, he's seen something that's made him a wiser man.

According to Gus, things were not nearly so smooth in the beginning:

> I remember Eddie in his best as well as his worst. When he was feeling bad, when he was taking dope and everything, he called me everything under the sun. He had the house upside down, clothes all over the place, broken dishes, broken glasses--and his girlfriend was shaking like a leaf. After he got over the fit, I says, "When you're ready, you come." Just like that. "You want to do this," I says, "I don't want to see you no more." And I did. I stayed away two or three

> times. Even the program cancelled him out and I was going, two or three months later, to see him and the kids. And now, his girlfriend left him and everything, he went on his own, he lives with his brother, he works, and he called me yesterday and he said, "Everything is beautiful, Gus. I miss you." . . . This kid was in bad, bad shape. Real bad shape. It took me all this time, but I fought and I fought--I made up my mind not to give up until he goes straight--but, Jesus, finally, he woke up.

Gus stated that in addition to commitment, it is genuine concern that leads to significant relationships with the young people:

> Me, I don't have an education, but I have an education what I went through in life, in real life, and that's what I teach them. . . . The kids, they need adults to teach them; adults with patience; adults who feel about them. They don't want bluffers. They know. Because they can outsmart anybody, because they've been out in the streets so long. They know if you're sincere or if you're faking. Know what I mean? That's why I get to them. . . .
>
> The first thing I tell them, I says, "I'm not a government agent. I'm here for you. Only you. I'm here because I want to do this, because what you're doing is wrong, dead wrong. You'll never make it in life.". . . They realize what they're doing is wrong. Some of them, they already know. But they don't know how to get out of it, because they don't have any connections. The only connections they got is the same people who started them that way. That's how they got clipped. . . . Most of the families, they don't care. They've put up with so much from these kids--and these families aren't stable to begin with--they kick them out of the house. . . .
>
> And these kids got no shoes, they're hungry, they live out in the streets, and they try to block everything out by getting drunk or being doped up, because nobody cares. That's my theory on this subject. Give him your telephone number if he gets in trouble. Tell him, "Let me know what's happening, maybe I can be a help." . .
> As time goes by, and so forth, the kids I knew from the old days, they call me if they do something out of line, even though they are not now in the program. . . . I tell them, I say, "Look, you will do good. What's the matter with you? You don't want to get into the same hole again. You know what's down there." So I try to explain to them. They make a promise to you.

> I say, "Look, that's how you've got to do it if you want to survive. That's it, forget everything else. Aren't you happy, you got a jacket on your back and you didn't steal it. You worked for it. You got a five dollar bill, and you worked for it." They understand, these kids, they're smarter than we are. I meet some kids, they've got brilliant minds. They're lacking the supervision, they're lacking the guardians, they're lacking the compassion and love. And that's what throws these kids off kilter.

Mary and Cindy (Teen Moms)

Mary Dubois was born in northern Maine, near the border of French Canada. Like Gus and Frances, Mary had a hard life, and she survived with a lot of strength. When she was in her early 20s, Mary's husband died:

> What I have in common with the teen mothers is that I was widowed very young. My youngest daughter was 10 months old. I brought up my three children alone. I went into debt sometimes. I had to work hard. I was a cashier, a bookkeeper, certified nurses aide, a beautician. . . . I did office work, different types. And my working was not worth my while. Part-time work until the kids were in school all day. My husband's social security helped me bring them up.

She now lives in a working-class section of Portland, in her own home; she's in her late 60s, a small but animated woman with a powerful personality. She joined the Teen Moms program after her daughter, who had moved home after a divorce, decided to leave again to join the Navy. Feeling the empty nest anew--Mary's other children and grandchildren had moved away earlier--she wanted something to "fill my time. . . . I am not ready to retire yet, but I don't want to work full time." In Teen Moms, she works with four teenage mothers and visits each one on a different day of the week.

Cindy Burke is 20 years old, white, from a working-class Catholic family outside of Portland. She lives in public housing with her two young children, ages one and three years. In between these two children, Cindy lost a son to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. She survives on AFDC, having dropped out of high school in the ninth grade after the birth of her first child. Her ex-husband lives in another state. Cindy's relationship with her parents is rocky. Her father refuses to accept her predicament, and her mother does so only reluctantly; Cindy does see her mother about once a week, but only for a few minutes. After learning about Cindy's second pregnancy, her grandfather told her that she was "breeding like a rabbit," and won't have anything to do with her. Her one friend in Portland moved to Indiana.

Cindy had abused her children in the past, which was part of the reason she was referred to Teen Moms:

> I just started getting pressure built up all the time because no one was there to help me. That's why I got involved in this program. To help me out a little, something to look forward to instead of just hanging out all day.

The previous year had been particularly traumatic for Cindy; her boyfriend committed suicide, a tragedy that almost sent her over the edge.

About three months prior to the interviews, Mary started working with Cindy every Wednesday morning. On one level, Mary helps Cindy learn how to cook, to budget better, and to blow off steam safely when the children are getting to her. On another level, she provides emotional support and friendship. Cindy said:

> I see my mom when she drops off Steven (Cindy's brother) on Mondays so we don't have that much chance to even talk or sit down. So that Wednesday when Mary comes over we just talk about everything, you know. There are some things I don't even dare talk to my mother about. . . .
>
> She tries to talk about things and what I should change. I am not saying personality things and stuff like that. Just turning things around in the household. I tried it and her idea worked out better than the way it was before. It seems like she's never wrong. . . .
>
> I guess her husband died. It's like she's been through it and it seems like she knows what I am going through. I told her today that I really needed some help about seeing another guy. I am sure she's going to come up with something like she always does. You give her time to think about something and the next week she'll say "you remember when you mentioned this" and you know she'll come out with something. She's really good about everything. . . .
>
> The day that it happened [Cindy's boyfriend's suicide] she was right over and she gave me a great big hug and asked me if I was alright, and if I was going to be alright, which really helped me out. I really didn't think we were that close until that happened and she was right there. 'Cause I called my dad and he really didn't want to talk about it since he didn't know the person and didn't care about it. So I said 'bye and hung up on him. But with Mary you can talk about it

and she's not going to shut you out. That's what my parents have always done to me. If they don't agree with what I say they'll shut you right out and you won't see them for a couple of weeks. They'll just ignore you. Mary comes over every week and no matter what I say to her she's right there still. . . . She's really straight with me. . . .

She's like my best friend, my mom, the whole works. Nothing embarrasses her at all. That's why she's like a teenager really to me. When I was in school with other girls we used to talk about this and that, with her you can do the same thing. My mother, she's old-fashioned. With Mary you can talk about everything, even relationships. She'll tell how she feels about this and how she feels about that. I listen to her.

When Mary first visited Cindy, however, the teenager was not very enthusiastic about working together. According to Mary:

At first, she was offensive to a certain extent, most of the girls are. The first time I visited her I played with Michelle, the little girl. She's very attention grabbing. So I played with her the first day, at the same time as Cindy. I went up there and read to her every book she had, we played with dolls, we played with a horse, we done everything she had. Then the following week when I went there Michelle started again. I said Michelle, now is your mother's turn. This time Cindy was number one. . . .

I really enjoy being with her. In fact, I wouldn't mind if my son bring home a girl like her to me. She's a very good mother. It shows in the children. She's very attentive to the children. . . . In fact, she's a true friend. My relationship with her is different than a mother/daughter relationship. I'm too domineering with my own children, but I do not dominate her. I think a grandmother/granddaughter would be much more like it. My daughters are my daughters; she's like a granddaughter, and she needs help. . . .

She likes to learn how to cook, basic cooking. We made a big dish of lasagna. Today we didn't do too much, we just discussed different things. She discussed her ex-husband a little bit today. . . .

I tell her, you have to get your education. . . . I hate to see a wasted brain. . . . You cannot go anywhere without that first diploma. She's only 20 years old and she's had a rough life and she wants to better herself. Right now she mentioned something about going

back to school and I said that that's the best thing you've got. I says you are on AFDC and the state will support you. It's going to be hard on you but look what will come out of it. Once you get your high school diploma you might like to go further on to college and they will encourage you to do so. Of course, they have so much literature that I showed her what to do. How to get college grants. So that's how she decided to go back. . . .

I tell her not to down herself so much. She feels so inferior. She's a pretty girl, to me. She's got an awful lot going for her. She downs herself, says "I have two children." I say you had a bad marriage, it didn't work; that's not your fault. It's just little things to make her feel good, to love herself. . . . I taught that to my children, I teach that to all the girls. They are individuals. They don't have to copy this one or that one. What do you want to do with yourself? I don't teach them, I talk with them about it. They are special. Cindy is a beautiful mother.

Discussion of Primary Relationships

The three primary relationships described above are different in many respects: the elders have their own styles, the youth are distinct individuals, at different stages of development, confronting various challenges. Eddie is trying to hold a job and avoid going back to jail, Cindy is struggling to raise two children alone and escape a history of child abuse, and Steve is trying to make the grade and stay in school. Despite this diversity, the three relationships profiled, and the other primary relationships observed, are linked by several closely related traits.

Kinship Attachment. The ties between elders and youth in primary relationships are reminiscent of those between blood relations; the words of the youth profiled above convey this depth of attachment. Eddie describes Gus as "more or less a father to me." Cindy portrays Mary in similar terms: "She's like my best friend, my mom, the whole works." On the elder side, this sense of family is reflected in Mary's comment that "I wouldn't mind if my son brought home a girl like her to me." In primary relationships, a sense of kinship often exists alongside powerful feelings of friendship.

In all of these alliances, the elder became either the most important person, or one of the two or three most important people (alongside actual family members) in the young person's life. These were unconditional and encompassing attachments.

As might be expected in these arrangements, the elders treat the young people as special. Gus tells Eddie, "I'm here for you. Only you!" Mary treats Cindy like she's "number one." The elders demonstrate to the teenagers that they are thinking of them when they are apart, and by so doing, begin weaving unseen (along with seen) connections between their lives. This is accomplished through simple acts, like baking cookies. It can also revolve around personal issues, as Cindy describes sharing a problem with Mary: "I am sure she's going to come up with something like she always does. You give her time to think about something and the next week she'll say you remember when you mentioned this and she'll come out with something."

Similarly, elders in primary relationships indicate that their commitment doesn't begin and end with the weekly session. They give their phone numbers to the teenagers and tell them, as Frances told Steve, "If you get into anything, you can call me." They actively allow themselves to become involved in the lives of these young people, even while recognizing that this involvement will likely not last longer than a year.

The Bad with the Good. Just as the elders in primary relationships make it known that their involvement is not restricted to a particular weekly time slot, they express a willingness not only to accept but to engage the full range of the young person's experiences and emotions. The elders not only reinforce positive behavior and feelings, but also deal with the negative, troubling or unseemly dimensions of the young people's lives--their anger, irascibility, bad fortune--without losing faith or commitment. According to Cindy, "Mary comes over every week and no matter what I say to her she's right there still." Gus was able to withstand Eddie calling him "everything under the sun," and work with him to reconcile with his girlfriend. And Frances dealt directly with Steve's anger, teaching him "not to take things to extremes."

As a consequence, these primary relationships are characterized, in many cases, by struggle and intensity. The elders wrestle with difficult situations--suicide, abuse, fighting, addictions. They are often forced to tell the young people where their limits are, as Gus does when he tells Eddie that he won't put up with verbal abuse. The elders must maintain a delicate balance between limits and commitment, and the youth, having been betrayed many times by adults in their lives, are always testing the elders' acceptance.

Intimacy. These highly personal relationships are characterized by great intimacy. Steve describes the openness and sharing present in his relationship with Frances: "If we had problems or something we could talk to her about it. . . . She told us about herself so we could get to know each other." Eddie reflects these feelings in discussing Gus: "I opened up to him and he knew where

the hell I was coming from. . . . He understands me, maybe because he went through it himself." And Cindy explains, "With Mary you can talk about everything, even relationships. . . . There are some things I don't even dare talk to my mother about."

These quotes reveal several important points about primary relationships. The partners are comfortable revealing their feelings to each other. And they are reciprocal; the elders reveal their own struggles in a way that makes them more credible to the youth. The youth turn to the elders with their most important concerns.

This is not to say, however, that these primary relationships are without boundaries. The elders in these relationships appear sufficiently secure to drop a lot of the program-imposed boundaries--for example, about giving home phone numbers to the young people--but maintain firm internal boundaries. They never seem to confuse their own identities with those of the young person. They never become part of the peer group. They distinguish these relationships from relationships with their own children. And while they might reveal some of their own frailties, they never use these relationships as a vehicle for complaining or dependency.

Secondary Relationships

In order to get the flavor of secondary relationships, a series of cases will be presented in this category as well: Cora Perkins and Sue Rachuba (Teenage Parent Alternative Program); Sam Roth and David Jordan (School Volunteers for Boston); and Emily Winston and Monique Sanders (T-LC Mentors). Like the primary cases, these secondary relationships are representative of the wider group of secondary bonds encountered among the programs studied.

Cora and Sue (Teenage Parent Alternatives)

Cora Perkins is in her early 70s. She is black and was born in Toledo, Ohio. Her family moved to Cleveland and then to Detroit in 1951, where her husband worked in the automobile industry. She lives in her own house in the working-class black neighborhood she and her husband moved to over 35 years ago; Cora remembers that period fondly: "It was wonderful because everybody was neighbors then. They had been here for a long time. Everybody was close." Over the years, friends have passed away and moved out of the neighborhood and she feels much more alone. Her daughter and four grandsons all live in Ohio.

Partly in response to this loneliness, Cora became a Foster Grandparent in 1983 and has been working in a special classroom at the Teenage Parent Alternative School since then: "I work with the little babies, three weeks until four months." The

teenage mothers who are attending classes in the school leave their three-week to four-month-old children in Room 101, in the care of Cora and another Foster Grandmother. These mothers also spend one period during the day, called "child care hour," in the room. When the baby is four months old, the mother and child move to another classroom.

Sue Rachuba met Cora last year when her son Bobby was in Cora's room. A senior at TAPA, Sue is expecting to receive her diploma this year and wants to go into cosmetology. She comes from a large and closely knit Hungarian-American family that gets together as a whole every Sunday night for dinner; Sue's father is employed with a heating and cooling company.

The relationship between Cora and Sue developed around the baby: "She was always playing with Bobby. Every time I'd go in there Cora was holding him. She would tell me what he was doing and if he started doing anything different. I'd tell her stuff that he does at home." Sue came quickly to trust Cora with her son, and a warmth developed between them. "She's a very nice person. And she's really aware of what's happening now. She isn't living in her days or anything like that. She knows about everything that's going on now, like teen pregnancy and the drinking, drugs."

Sometimes they would talk about their lives, and Sue learned that Cora's teenage years had a lot in common with her own: "She did the same things any other teenager would do--go to dances and stuff. She'd tell us about her boyfriends and her husband." And she felt that the racial difference did not in any way inhibit the relationship. Sue did not recall ever talking much with Cora about serious problems she was facing: "I've never really had serious problems. Not really. Nothing bad. Just like if me and my boyfriend, the baby's dad, got into a fight or anything--little piddling stuff." When she did ventilate in this way, Cora "listened, but she would just end up not really telling me anything because I didn't really ask any questions, but [she] just said things like 'that happened to me when I was that age,' and end up going into a story. . . . I didn't really learn anything from them, but it was just neat to hear them, you know."

Sue explained that Cora was the first older person she had ever really known: "My own grandma died when I was two." She really enjoyed the time together with Cora: "It's like when you're in school you have this one favorite teacher that's always been nice to you and helped you out. That's kind of what it was like with her." Sue said they never thought about getting together outside of the classroom, but said she was planning to stop by Cora's room to see how she was doing.

Cora also viewed getting to know Sue as a positive experience. However, she explained that she is very careful not to get too close to any of the girls:

> We're very friendly with the students, and if they ask us something we tell them personally but we don't tell them a whole lot because we're not supposed to. We are just supposed to be the "grandparents" to the babies.

She also explained that time limitations discouraged the development of deeper bonds. As a consequence, she concentrates her emotional energy on the steady stream of babies, who provide for her an immense source of enjoyment.

Sam and David (School Volunteers for Boston)

Sam Roth learned about School Volunteers for Boston through a newspaper ad. A gruff man in his late 60s, Sam retired as a draftsman for the federal government several years ago. He now lives in a home with his wife in a middle-class suburb of Boston. His daughters are grown-up and out of the house. There was considerable tension between Sam and his children, and he hardly ever sees the two girls.

Concerned that he was "rotting" after retirement, and urged by his wife, Sam decided to try tutoring math at West Roxbury High School for a year. The school is located in an upper-middle-class white neighborhood, but due to busing, the student population consists primarily of lower-income black students. The prospect of helping these black students appealed to Sam: "I consider myself a liberal. I've known what it's like, as a Jew, to suffer prejudice."

Assigned to a math class, he tutored students three days a week for an hour each day, in the back of the classroom. Over the year Sam worked with a total of seven students, usually in groups of three or four: "It was totally on a volunteer basis. The teacher would suggest to students who needed help that they could work with me as long as they wanted."

Impatient with formality, Sam encouraged the students to call him by his first name, and anchored the math he was teaching in the real world: "I did everything in wages. That means something to kids."

Sam spent much of the year tutoring David Jordan, a 17-year-old black student who was struggling in the class, but who Sam could see "cared about the stuff; he was trying and he was smart. He just needed somebody to put some connections together. To give him some feedback. And he picked it up. When he did, I praised him highly for it."

David is a burly young man who can barely fit in his Junior ROTC uniform and who plays tackle on the West Roxbury football team. He lives with his mother in an entirely black neighborhood 45 minutes from the school. His plan is to enlist after graduation, but he doesn't know if he'll be able to finish school: "I came to West Roxbury from a special school, where they took things more at our own pace. Here, it's a little overwhelming."

According to David, Sam's tutoring in math really helped: "It got me through the class. He was really patient with me, and took a real interest in my work, in helping me learn the stuff and do better. . . . He's a very nice guy."

The focus of their contacts was primarily on the subject matter, though David felt that he had a better rapport with Sam than the other students, and that Sam cared about David as a person: "He would always ask me questions, about the math but also how I was doing. And he'd spend extra time helping me. He made me feel special." David considered Sam to be a friend: "He was the first older guy I ever got to know." However, neither ever contemplated getting together outside of the tutoring, and both seemed to acknowledge very strong limits to their involvement beyond the activity at hand.

Emily and Monique (T-LC Mentors)

Emily Winston is a handsome, highly educated and patrician woman, married to a professor of history at the University of Michigan. In her early 60s, she stopped working full time due to a leg injury. Recently, she decided to tutor in the T-LC program after reading about it in an AARP magazine:

> Well, I just began to get terribly upset about the dropout figures and the whole problem of dealing with these kids who were poor and can't get a job, so I figured education has got to be the answer. Dropping out of school means that you've ruined your whole life right off, bang, you know, and so I just thought, maybe I could do something to help. I read about this program, and I didn't want to work regularly so I had the time to do something like this. Everybody said go for it, so I did.

In T-LC she has been working weekly with three girls. One of these teenagers is Monique, a six-foot-tall, 200-pound black girl of 15 with a fiery temperament, whom Emily tutors each Wednesday. Monique lived with her mother, but their fighting resulted in the teenager moving to her aunt's; the aunt uses drugs heavily, and partly as a result, Monique's life has been in upheaval for months. Working with Monique has proven to be extremely engaging for Emily, although sometimes more than she bargained for:

> She's a big, strong girl and she has a violent temper. And she's far from dumb. She's really quite bright but she doesn't read very well, she doesn't get very good grades, she's got no support at home. . . . It seems like somebody being a friend for her, the way I've been trying to be, gives her a little bit of something. When she's got a problem or something is bothering her she comes down to the mentor center instead of going around kicking or telling off her teacher. She's a perfect example of the kind of kid who's going to end up having a baby or running away or not finishing school or hitting someone so hard it causes serious problems.

This alarming portrait is all the more striking next to Monique's description of their times together:

> I would come down during study hour and basically we'd get down to my math work, and she would help me with it. She would not do it, she would just basically help me. Then when we would get through with the work, she'd tell me I better go take that back to my class, so the teacher could correct it. Then I'd come back and she would show me pictures of birds, 'cause she lives in the country. So she shows me pictures of birds and different animals. You know she loves to sew and I do too. We crocheted.

It is obvious that Monique really likes Emily:

> She's really nice. Like my grandmother, she would always bring me goodies. She'd ask me where are your classes, those kind of things. She asked me how I was doing with my family, how are you getting along? I would tell her we get along fine. . . . She'd look--she'll tell me, she'll say, "Monique look me straight in the eye." And I would look down and she'd say "no, no, no, look people straight in the eye and tell them." She would know if you were telling the truth or not. She would always want you to tell the truth to her and be honest.

And Monique respected Emily for the discipline she gave her: "She was strict, she wanted all children to get their work done, not to play around. Just get your work done and then you have time to talk and look at the pictures." Monique seemed not to mind this push because it came out of Emily's confidence in her ability: "I learned that--I know that--Mrs. Winston wants me to do my very best, not to just get by--no D's and E's. What's best for my life in the future."

According to Monique, she and Emily were on the verge of getting close, she had become "almost like a grandmother to me," but there always was "a little bit of distance." Emily said:

> I think she gets a sense of security out of this that she does not get with her family. And she wants to--oh, for instance, we just moved to an old house last spring and she's dying to come out and help. She said "I'll do anything." She wants to pursue the relationship but I don't think it's a good idea for her or for any of the other students and me and the other mentors to mix up our private lives with our positions here. The minute she sees our house--it's a 19th-century house, we have lots of antique furniture--she's going to think we're rich. That's going to change her whole thinking of us. We're not rich, my husband is a history professor. Our lifestyle is so different from any way she's ever lived that it's just going to change her whole way of thinking about our relationship. So, I don't think that's a good idea to let her come out. Also, she has no control over what her very undesirable friends might do if one of them thought it might be fun to get in some trouble or something.

Emily finds herself struggling with the paraprofessional/non-professional distinction. Her desire to help and feelings for Monique conflict with the desire for professional control and detachment:

> At times she tells me things, the only problem I have is that there's no professional handy, I'm not quite sure I know how to deal with some of the things she tells me. You just never can be sure that what you say is the thing that you ought to have said. Generally, all I really expected to get with her was to build some confidence and be friendly and get her interested in something. So, I don't think I could blow it too badly, if I'm not trying to give her actual advice.

Emily senses that she might really be able to change Monique's life:

> That girl's fascinating, she really is. Because she's just so difficult, somebody who's maybe going to go to pieces and drop out of school and never make anything out of her life at all unless somebody helps her or calms her down or gets her to see there's more to life than running around and hanging on street corners.

But she also feels the need to pull back before getting too involved.

Discussion of Secondary Relationships

The three secondary relationships profiled suggest the variety of ties encompassed in this grouping. These descriptions are less complicated and less detailed than those offered in the primary cases, a reflection of the generally leaner nature of secondary bonds.

Good Neighbors. The elders in secondary relationships tend to assume a helping posture toward the young people. They are "good neighbors" concerned about the plight of these youth, and are more than willing to take some time to assist them. The elders differ from their counterparts in primary relationships in their decision to limit their involvement in the lives of the young people. While interested in the youth, these elders are careful not to become too much like relatives or close friends.

Emily Winston states this position clearly: "She [Monique] wants to pursue the relationship, but I don't think it is a good idea for her or for any of the other students and me and the other mentors to mix up our private lives with our positions here." Cora explains that she is "friendly with the students," but refrains from letting herself become too involved.

As a result of their efforts and interest, elders in secondary relationships tend to become important people in the lives of the youth--significant to them, but not among the small circle of the most important individuals in their lives. Sue views Cora as "a very nice person," like a "favorite teacher that's always been nice to you and helped you out." This characterization is consistent with the perspectives of most youth in secondary relationships.

Engaging the Good. Where primary relationships engage the positive and negative aspects of the youth's life, secondary relationships concentrate on reinforcing the positive aspects of behavior. In other words, they do not usually involve dealing with crises, problems and negative emotions, like anger and hostility. When youth in secondary relationships raise problems, the elders listen and may provide advice, but tend to refrain from delving too deeply or from actively trying to resolve the difficulty.

Secondary relationships choose to focus on the specified tasks at hand. While primary relationships use the tasks--such as teaching child-rearing, imparting job-getting skills, tutoring academic subjects--as a means for building trust and intimacy, secondary relationships concentrate on the activities as ends in themselves. A good example of this orientation is Sam's intention to teach David math and his focus on providing positive feedback to David when he succeeds. In keeping, David describes Sam as taking "a real interest in my work, in helping me learn the stuff

and do better." Cora and Sue concentrate on discussing how the baby is doing, in contrast to Mary, who focuses on and has a primary relationship with the young mother.

This orientation produces a different tone in the relationships. Rarely seen is the intensity and sense of struggle that is present in most primary relationships. These secondary bonds are characterized much more by pleasant interchanges.

Informal and Public. While partners in secondary relationships discuss personal matters occasionally, they do not have intimate bonds. Partners do not learn much about each other. Their conversations are informal and comfortable, but they do not cross certain boundaries. A young person may allude to the existence of a problem, but won't go into detail about it. Elders do not as a matter of course discuss their own lives.

Concomitantly, interaction occurs in public--in the classroom, in the workplace or at the program office. Phone numbers are not given out, elders don't invite youth to their homes, and program protocols governing the partners' interaction are closely followed.

CONCLUSIONS

An important finding of this study is that genuine intergenerational relationships form in the five programs studied. The approximate estimate, developed from interviews with the older and younger pairs and with staff, is that under the right circumstances relationships form more than half the time. The balance of situations do not live up to our commonsense definitions of relationships--exhibiting the qualities of attachment, closeness, trust, importance and enjoyment.

Equally important is the discovery that within the group of relationships are two distinct types of significant bonds, which we have termed primary and secondary. The cases provided above illustrate these bonds with all their idiosyncracies, but they also reveal some essential characteristics. Primary relationships are distinguished by unconditional commitment, great intimacy, and engagement of both the good and bad sides of the youth; secondary relationships feature more limited but supportive involvement, with the elders focusing on functions and tasks, and retaining more emotional distance.

Primary relationships can be likened to kinship, while secondary ones are described as helpful neighborliness. Youth in secondary relationships will describe their elder partner as "a really nice person"; their counterparts in primary relationships are more inclined to describe the elder as being "like a second mother to me." Perhaps the easiest way to distinguish these bonds is to explain that in an emergency situation, with a great deal at

stake, the young person in a primary relationship might well dial the elder before anyone else; in a secondary relationship, the young person is unlikely to call the elder unless their primary group has been exhausted, and even then, he or she might not know the elder's phone number.

Of the six cases described, the example of Emily Winston and Monique may best illustrate the difference between primary and secondary bonds, precisely because this relationship is so close to the line between these two classifications. Emily and Monique have moved beyond tutoring to a genuine exchange about the teenager's tumultuous home situation, as well as to dealing directly with Monique's enormous anger. Emily comes face to face with Monique's need for someone to take a deep interest in her life--to make a commitment to her--and is tempted to go ahead with their relationship. However, she decides that to do so would be threatening to the order of her life, and feels compelled to pull back. There is a line she decides not to cross; it is a line that Gus, Mary and Frances do cross in their relationships with the young people profiled.

Along with these essential differences, however, primary and secondary intergenerational relationships share some important common features. First, they are both positive relationships. Second, the participants report an ability to communicate that transcends generational differences--it is remarkable how many youth describe the elder as being "like a teenager to me." These and other commonalities will be discussed in greater detail in the remaining sections, which relate to the creation of benefits and the fostering of alliances.

IV. BENEFITS TO YOUTH

The discovery that significant relationships form between elders and at-risk youth in the context of social programs is only of interest to the extent that these bonds are linked to important benefits. Addressing this elusive issue is complicated. Proponents of the importance of relationships are satisfied with anecdotal evidence, and skeptical observers demand more systematic proof of the effectiveness of relationships. While the policy debate is of considerable importance, this study's intent is to achieve greater clarity about which benefits we are interested in measuring. A subsequent step would be determining how to gauge impacts in these areas.

The following sections present the self-reported benefits of the youth interviewed, amplified by direct observations and the perspectives of staff. The goals are to illuminate what the young people derive from their interactions with the elders, and to guide the focus of future research.

The perspectives presented here confirm and expand many of the contentions reviewed in Chapter II. In particular, the study identified three bands of benefits that may best be visualized in concentric circles. The outer circle of benefits appears to accrue to all youth, regardless of whether they developed a significant relationship with a senior; these benefits are associated with changes in the general environment and basic contact with elders. A smaller middle circle encompasses youth involved in a significant (secondary or primary) relationship; these benefits concern improvements in the young person's immediate quality of life, as well as the strengthening of academic and other basic skills. The smallest, the inner circle, comprises longer-term psychological and social benefits accruing to young people in primary relationships.

BENEFITS TO ALL YOUTH

Even in instances where relationships did not form, but where sustained contact with older adults occurred, some benefits from the elders' presence appeared to result. These benefits are of two types.

Environment. The elders become an important part of the environment for youth, particularly in institutional settings. Elders in the Teenage Parent Alternative Program (TAPA), for example, are instrumental in creating a caring, warm and humanizing environment for the students, and in making the alternative school feel like a large extended family. Similarly, at School Volunteers for Boston, the elders add diversity to the classroom and to the school day of the young people. The presence of the

elders, who come from outside the schools, tends to open up these institutions and create a fresher atmosphere.

Exposure. Equally important is the direct contact young people have with elders, who frequently serve as role models. At TAPA, the elders' example as they work with the babies offers an excellent model of parenting that the teens observe daily. Even teenagers who can't remember the names of the elders they see each day, report learning from their presence, and feel a sense of indebtedness to them for their contribution; one girl in TAPA explained: "They help out a lot. I know this morning in the room that my child's in, the caregiver in there had about 10 kids in there and without the grandmothers . . . she would have went nuts."

An important question for future research is whether the mere presence of elders and the provision of one-on-one contact, even without concern for the formation of relationships, leads to improved program performance for youth.

BENEFITS TO YOUTH IN SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS (SECONDARY AND PRIMARY)

While the benefits described above are passive in nature, the advantages accruing to youth in primary and secondary relationships tend to be much more personal, direct and potent. They occurred principally in two areas.

Day-to-Day Quality of Life. All the youth in significant relationships reported improvements in their daily lives, attributable to working with the seniors. The young people felt better, enjoyed the time together and were thankful, in Cindy's words, for something in their week "to look forward to." In her case, and in the case of a number of other teenagers interviewed, the sessions with the elders constituted the highlight of their week. This contact was stimulating to the young person--an opportunity to get attention, be treated as special and be listened to carefully.

This point is critical. Youth value the chance to talk to someone who is not a parent or a teacher, who is not judgmental, and who is paying close attention. It gives them an opportunity to ventilate about problems at home, with their probation officer, or with their children. The chance to talk allows the young person to reduce stress and gain some perspective. The elders often say very little, while acting sympathetically and encouraging the young person to say what is on his or her mind.

There is a tendency to dismiss such "feel good" effects as superficial. However, this reaction may miss the important fact that the lives of at-risk youth are often difficult and painful;

these relationships offer a significant reprieve from isolation and monotony.

Christopher Jencks argued 15 years ago for improving the quality of school experiences for youth even without evidence that such improvements produced long-term impacts on achievement. Greenberger and Steinberg refresh the case in When Teenagers Work:

> It is an argument worth repeating. One does not need evidence linking stressful or unpleasant life circumstances in childhood with long-term harm or stunted development in adulthood in order to justify correcting noxious childhood circumstances. One only needs to be concerned about the immediate quality of life for young people *(Greenberger and Steinberg 1986, p.182)*.

Basic Skills. Alongside emotional benefits, youth in significant relationships cited learning tangibly from the elders' teaching: Cindy learned how to make a lasagna and to go upstairs and take a breather when she was about to explode at her kids. David learned how to approach math more effectively. Steve learned that the Constitution was developed in Philadelphia, and he progressed from a D to an A in history; Eddie learned how to look sharp at a job interview.

For the elders, these programs offer an opportunity to pass on skills they have acquired over the years, skills that now come to them as second nature and make them feel proud. Basic academic skills, job acquisition skills and parenting skills are three areas on which elders in this study focus, but other programs have used older people to teach particular vocational skills and hobbies like gardening and photography. The benefits a youth derives from this instruction result from the relationship as well as from the elder's skills, largely because the youth is trusting, engaged and interested--in other words, in an emotional state conducive to learning--and because the partners are together for a long enough period for progress to be made.

Skill acquisition is also furthered by the elders' concern with accountability. They check in predictably, they notice when assignments and promises are unfulfilled, they applaud success. Because the elders are obviously pulling for the teenagers to succeed, they seem to appreciate rather than resist being held accountable.

Overall, there may well be a link between intergenerational relationships and improved programmatic performance. In addition to the accounts of participants, staff, teachers, probation officers and social workers interviewed, some preliminary program

research also supports this connection.[2] More systematic research is in order, in particular, research focusing on increased length of stay (the product of enhanced quality of life) as well as on outcome measures (such as improved academic skills, reduced child abuse and decreased recidivism).

BENEFITS TO YOUTH IN PRIMARY RELATIONSHIPS

Participants in primary relationships enjoyed an additional layer of benefits that appear longer-term in nature and often extend beyond program performance. These benefits, improved stability, competence, access and maturity, were described by some youth in secondary relationships, but seemed much more developed in the primary group.

Stability. The elders promote the youths' stability in several ways.

Most immediately, they achieve a level of trust with the young people that enables them to turn to the seniors in times of great need. As a consequence, youth view the seniors as an important source of help in the crises that so often afflict young lives and in which, without the social supports of many middle-class youth, they are extremely vulnerable. These crises can initiate a skid that unravels months of progress, and from which it can take years to recuperate. The support of the elders at these key times serves to keep the youth on track and further cements the intergenerational relationship.

Many of the youth interviewed faced such dislocating crises--eviction, abuse, and job loss, to name a few. Examples from the interviews include the suicide of Cindy's boyfriend and the volatility of Eddie's relationship with the mother of his child. In the former instance, Mary gave Cindy a "great big hug," stuck with her and helped her get through the day; in the latter instance, at Eddie's request, Gus successfully helped the couple repair their relationship by reminding them that they loved each other and should stop being stubborn. The elders all entered the lives of the youth at a time of a crisis: teenage pregnancy, the impending prospect of jail or the danger of dropping out of school.

The elders promote the stability of the youth in another, more subtle way. They care about them and encourage a self-righting tendency that many possess. Repeatedly the young people testified to the power of caring, and to its absence in their lives.

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[2] Research on The Work Connection is being conducted by the National Center on Sentencing Alternatives at Brandeis University. Research on the Teen Moms program is being conducted by the State of Maine. Both studies are expected to be published in 1988.

Eddie explained: "He (Gus) always makes me . . . feel like someone cares. If someone cares, then I'm gonna be good. If no one cares, then it makes me not good." This feeling of unconditional loving and caring seems to be a lifeline for the youth, one described by a striking number of participants.

In an impassioned argument for the power of caring, certainly drawn from his own experience as an orphan, Gus said: "These kids got no shoes, they're hungry, they live out in the streets, and they try to block everything out by getting drunk or getting doped up, because nobody cares. That's my theory on this subject. Give him your telephone number if he gets in trouble, tell him to let me know what's happening, maybe I can be a help."

Finally, the elders contribute to the stability of the young people by interpreting for them, by turning confusing and depressing events into coherent and understandable lessons. In so doing, they offer the young people a sense of coherence, a way of thinking about their lives that underpins their desire to stay on track. Mary described how she provides this help to Cindy: "She downs herself, says 'I have two children.' I say you had a bad marriage, it didn't work; that's not your fault." Gus does the same for former charges in danger of backsliding: "I says, 'Look, you will do good. . . . You don't want to get into the same hole again. . . . Aren't you happy, you got a jacket on your back and you didn't steal it. You worked for it. You got a five dollar bill, and you worked for it.' They understand."

Essentially, the elders promote active coping on the part of the youth in three ways: instrumentally be being there and standing up for them; emotionally, by caring about them; and cognitively, through interpreting events.

Competence. The elders encourage in the young people a sense of competence, principally through developing an appreciation of abilities they already possess.

The adolescents interviewed suffered frequently from a poor sense of self-esteem. In particular, these are teenagers who have always been told that they are "screw-ups," essentially, that they are inept and will always be inept--a position reinforced by having a baby at 15, collecting report cards full of Fs, getting busted by the cops. They know they can't do anything right.

Rather than just offering comfort, the elders emphasize that the young people are skilled and capable in many important ways. They help them discover the many things they already know how to do well, identify these skills, and enable the youth to respect their positive attributes. This occurs at a mundane level: a young mother will hold her baby correctly, for example, and the foster grandmother will explain that what she is doing is great. In many cases these young people cannot distinguish on their own

between what they do well and what they need to change; they often assume (even if loathe to admit it) that everything is wrong. The elders help set in motion a cycle of positive actions, and engender in these young people a newfound sense of competence.

Access and Advocacy. The elders take it upon themselves to help teach the youth how to navigate "the system." They show them tricks for getting past red tape, how to interpret job listings and find financial aid for college. In doing so they help make the world seem less incoherent and intimidating, perceptions that can be paralyzing barriers to young people pursuing their goals.

According to Tom Flood, former consultant at The Work Connection program: "The mentors have little patience for bureaucracy. If a kid needs shoes, they find a way to get him shoes--today!" Flood explains that many young people get discouraged by the complexity of the social service bureaucracy and give up on getting benefits to which they are entitled. Similarly, the Foster Grandmothers at Teen Moms accompany the young mothers to three or four agencies until they're satisfied that the young woman and her baby are given their due. One older woman explained: "I took her out to a clinic, and then we applied for food stamps, Medicaid and all the services the state supplies for these girls. And she's all set. I make sure that she makes all her appointments."

One of the most interesting transformations that takes place in these programs is the development of the elders into powerful advocates as they get to know the young people better, come to understand their circumstances, and begin to believe deeply in them. The mentors in The Work Connection will come to court with the youth and speak to the probation officer. The elders in T-LC will let the student's teacher know that they are working hard and grasping the material. The youth become their cause, although the seniors as a rule refrain from intervening in situations with the youth's parents.

As a consequence of this advocacy and the fact of the relationship, the youth acquire greater legitimacy in the outside world. A probation officer or child protective services worker is likely to be less hard on the teenager when in the hands of a respected elder. According to the director of Teen Moms, neighbors previously prone to hair-trigger reporting of a teen mom for child abuse--which can destroy the young mother's confidence in her natural ability as a mother--tend to place more trust in the youth, knowing that she is working with a foster grandmother. According to staff at T-LC, teachers feel less compelled to crack down on students who are struggling in class, knowing they are trying hard and spending time working with a mentor.

An additional form of sponsorship occurs when the elders connect the young people to their networks in the community. For example, one mentor at The Work Connection found the young person he was working with a job with his son-in-law. In primary relationships, these social networks often become available to the young people.

Maturity. The elders promote the maturity of the teens by taking them seriously. They take them out to restaurants, have them over to their house, take them to cultural events, and essentially usher the young people into the adult world. Even more important, the elders treat the youth as adults, and require that they make their own decisions. When Frances takes Steve to a restaurant, she makes him choose the location, banishing fast food as a possibility. Afterwards he describes the experience as profoundly maturing, "She doesn't make you feel like you're a three-year-old and you need to be told what to do and how to do it. Being with her was like getting practice being an adult"--practice of considerable value in making the difficult transition from adolescence into the world of adulthood.

DISCUSSION

It appears that the intergenerational relationships observed in the programs are indeed linked to some important benefits. At minimum, the mere presence of elders may contribute to an improved program environment. However, participation in a significant relationship changes the nature of these benefits by increasing their potential importance and longer-term impact. In short, the type of relationship governs the type of benefit.

While the benefits available to youth in the outer (no relationship) and middle (primary and secondary) circles appear to lead to improved program performance and probably contribute to increased length of stay in the programs, the benefits described by youth in the interior circles, mostly youth participating in primary relationships, go beyond the program's borders. For them, indications of improved social maturity, self-esteem and psychological resilience may well be critical factors in the development of long-term self-sufficiency. The relationships seem to develop a life and "curriculum" of their own: the lessons range far beyond and reach far deeper than the program's dictated tasks. The youth even come, in many cases, to participate in the "real world" social networks of the elders.

One interesting possibility for these bonds may be the development of a youth's ability to seek out and cultivate future relationships with adults, and to do so outside the context of the program. This ability is essential, since the relationships in the programs are relatively short term, generally not extending much beyond a year. If participation in these engineered relationships provides tools for the formation of subsequent rela-

tionships in the community, this approach could be seen as an alternate paradigm for youth development. There is already some research evidence, presented in Chapter II, that relationships of this type may be linked to longer-term success for at-risk youth.

Returning to the short-term nature of these bonds, it is interesting to note that neither youth nor elders expect to stay in close contact forever; both seem untroubled by the fact that when the time is right they will stop getting together. They seem to share confidence that the relationship will follow a natural life course, especially since the youths' lives are always shifting and turning--a new love relationship will consume all their energy, or they will move to another school. Nevertheless, retrospective interviews suggest that the relationships appear to "soak in," and the youth carry the relationship's imprint around with them long after it ceases functioning in a day-to-day manner.

In determining the ultimate impact of the relationship, perhaps timing is more important than duration. The young people seem to go through a series of turning points, times when they are re-evaluating their lives, often in response to an event or crisis. The presence of a strong intergenerational relationship at one of these key turning points might well be instrumental in redirecting the young person, and in producing a shift in trajectory from failure to one more likely to produce survival.

V. FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS

Why do intergenerational relationships take hold? Is it simply the result of chemistry between two individuals, or are these bonds susceptible as well to structural forces, encouragement and programming strategies? The following section addresses these questions by examining the relationships observed in five programs. The focus is on two areas: the circumstances and disposition of participants, and the important decisions made by programs.

In the analysis of the pairings observed, they were first separated into primary and secondary bonds, and then organized according to program. The initial division permitted special attention to personal factors, the latter to program influence. In understanding the implications of this analysis, it bears repeating that the small size of the sample, the variation in participants across programs, the great diversity of program approach, and the extent to which implementation varied even within programs, makes any leap to generalization about the programs' relative quality impossible.

PERSONAL FACTORS

There is a tendency in our society to view any close personal relationship in romantic terms, to expect that its basis is a "chemistry" to be neither understood nor controlled. This viewpoint is not restricted to romantic love; in fact, mentoring relationships seem to receive the same treatment:

> A mentoring relationship is a matter of human chemistry. This chemistry distinguishes the mentor from the traditional volunteer. In establishing a relationship it is essential to take into account the difference between individuals--the chemistry that exists between the mentor and the young person with whom the mentor will work. (*Mahoney 1986*)

Implicit in this view is the conviction that relationships cannot be manufactured, especially by social programs, unless a strong personal basis for this connection already exists. Also implicit is the contention that social programs that seek to encourage relationships should pay special attention to elder-youth matching strategies.

There is wisdom in the "chemical" perspective. Personality, chemistry and character obviously play an important role in the development of most significant relationships. At the same time, however, it is possible to over-romanticize factors like chemistry and to underestimate more mundane influences. An examination of primary and secondary relationships in this study reveals a

predominance of pairings in which the partners shared no obvious "chemistry" at first, and to this day maintain different styles, interests and attitudes. They recount their early apprehension and skepticism that any closeness would develop, and repeatedly express amazement over the rich bond that has evolved. Furthermore, most of the participants in these relationships could be characterized as "ordinary" and unremarkable, by no means the people one would expect to see playing these parts on TV.

This observation raises a series of pointed questions, well expressed by Michael Rutter:

> How is it that some people have confidants to whom they can turn? What has happened to enable them to have social supports that they can use effectively at moments of crisis? Is it chance, the spin of the roulette wheel of life, or did prior circumstances, occurrences, or actions serve to bring about this desirable state of affairs? *(Rutter 1987, p.317)*

For most young participants in this study, these alliances with elders were not attributable nearly so much to individual initiative or personal chemistry as they were to strong emotional needs, social circumstances and some shrewd strategy by the programs.

The Youth

Program staff and older adults confirm the observation of this study that relationships occur in a substantial percentage of pairings. The young people who came to participate in these relationships could be characterized as "receptive"; in general they shared two characteristics: they were relatively lonely and they were intact emotionally.

These youth can be distinguished from the group of youngsters often termed "resilient," and from another segment of young people who might be called "resistant." Resilient youth are the ones who seem capable of seeking out helping adults in the most dire circumstances. They tend not to show up in these programs because they don't need them; when they do, they are less fully engaged because they have a full agenda of relationships outside the program.

Resistant youth may not have other adult supports or be capable of finding them on their own (like resilient youth), but they are so emotionally scarred from bad experiences with adults that they are not able to put their trust in the elders. These youth also tend not to be in programs, or to remain in them only for a short time, since they get tossed out for being intractable. Economist Paul Osterman has estimated that about 20 percent of youth who enter social programs fit into this group of youth who are so

seriously disturbed that they require long-term psychological help. This group consists of youngsters who, in Osterman's words, not only "can't read, write and do arithmetic" but have had "such devastating life experiences that they were just blown away" *(Lefkowitz 1986, p.44)*. Studies of other programs have revealed a similar mix of at-risk youth *(Jaffe and Freedman 1987)*.

The labels receptive, resilient and resistant more likely fit phases in youth development than permanent characteristics of individuals. Resilient youth may be receptive ones who had a good experience during that stage; receptive youth may have turned themselves around.

Youth who are receptive are often in the early stages of a metamorphosis, struggling to pull themselves together, but not capable of doing it on their own. Yet they do not have anyone to turn to. This problem is exacerbated when they hit crises and have no recourse for support. Often these young people, in the words of Jane Lee Eddy of the Taconic Foundation, yearn for the acceptance of caring adults, yet are "very good at hiding the fact from themselves and everyone else" *(Eddy 1987)*. However when this receptive stage coincides with the sustained opportunity to work with an older person, the result can be the strong relationship and important benefits described in previous chapters.

It is worth repeating that a great many at-risk adolescents face loneliness, the most important condition for receptivity. Isolated from adults in a treacherous world, suspended in a precarious stage of life for a prolonged period of time, these young people are essentially alone. Books about their plight bear titles like Growing Up Forgotten and Growing Up on Your Own in America. In fact, the more isolated he or she is, the more open the young person is likely to be to a significant relationship.

Identifying these receptive youth is at best an imprecise task; but programs for at-risk youth seem to attract a substantial portion of young people who satisfy this description. This may be particularly true in the case of initiatives working with out-of-school youth, such as teen mothers and juvenile offenders. These young people tend to be isolated not only from parents and adults like social workers and probation officers but from peers as well. The young mothers are cut off from their friends by the obligations of single motherhood, which often require that they remain home and abandon many trappings of the life of a teenager. Juvenile offenders who are struggling to straighten out their lives must often shed old friends and contacts, since they were the ones who led the youth into trouble originally.

The Elders

The increase in early retirement has left many elders over 60 with time on their hands but few opportunities to spend it productively. At the same time, geographic mobility has served to separate families and leave many older people without much contact with their children and grandchildren. The toll of divorce and widowhood and the isolation of housing for older people have created a vast group of elders in strong need of opportunities for human contact and productivity.

For many of these people, particularly the vigorous and those whose fixed incomes are simply too small, stipended work opportunities are one of the best vehicles for simultaneously satisfying personal, social and economic needs. Inspired by a decision to escape loneliness, boredom, a sense of uselessness and financial constraints--and in a great many cases, the feelings of missing their own children and grandchildren--people come forward to participate in intergenerational and other service programs.

These circumstances, common in the older population, were among the most compelling reasons why the elders interviewed as part of this study made the decision to serve. Sam found himself "rotting" at home; Frances felt the need to be productive, to do something other than go to school. Mary decided to join when her daughter moved out of the house. Cora, facing similar circumstances--all of her children living in Ohio and most of her friends passed away--determined that participation in the Foster Grandparent program was the right thing to do with her days.

Not surprisingly, upon joining, the enthusiasm of the elders for the work is remarkable, as is their propensity to remain serving for long periods of time. The average length of stay in some Foster Grandparent programs studied, for example, is seven years. And these foster grandparents, like many other elders, serve a considerable amount each week, usually 20 hours. Program operators report unanimously that elders make terrific workers; they are supremely reliable, responsible and considerate.

The Special Connection

The willingness on the part of elders to serve is well documented. However, this study indicates that the older population may constitute far more than an available and enthusiastic source of labor. A substantial number of elders may be particularly well-suited to help at-risk youth: these elders are as much bundles of resources as they are bundles of needs. In fact, their very needs might well be considered resources.

The isolation and exclusion from productive roles that characterize the lives of many elders leave them particularly open to developing relationships with the young people. They try hard,

reach out to the youth, make it clear that they like the young person and want to help them. In making these efforts, many of the older people reveal considerable ability and sophistication in the art of alliance building. They are good at forging relationships.

These abilities are revealed graphically in the cases presented in Chapter III, especially the primary relationships. While none of the elders profiled is a trained social worker, psychologist or educator, and while all of them encountered some tough situations in working with their younger partner, none were lost; they basically knew what they were doing. In fact, Gus, Mary and Frances appear exceptionally gifted in the art of developing bonds with young people at risk.

These mentors seem to understand the importance of good timing, a knack for knowing when to shoot straight with the young person, and when to lay back. One of the mentors from The Work Connection describes the key turning point in the development of bonds as being the moment when the youth started providing more than "yes" or "no" answers; the elders wait until the youth signal their receptivity.

The elders revealed their good instincts in a number of other ways. They scrupulously avoid getting caught in the middle of conflicts between the young person and his or her parents; they set up their help so that the young people have a chance to return the favor and, in so doing, avoid feeling dependent; and even when offering criticism, the elders manage to avoid contaminating their overall acceptance of the youth.

The skill revealed by the elders suggests that they are guided by more than need in their interaction with the teenagers. One convincing theory is that seniors in our society, as well as in other cultures, are drawn to fulfil what psychiatrist Robert Butler terms the "Elder Function":

> The "elder" function refers to the natural propensity of the old to share with the young the accumulated knowledge and experience they have collected. If unhampered and indeed encouraged, this "elder" function takes the form of counseling, guiding, and sponsoring those who are younger. It is tied to the development of an interconnectedness between the generations. It is important to a sense of self-esteem-to be acknowledged by the young as an elder, to have one's life experience seen as interesting and valuable (*Butler 1973, p.24*).

Erik and Joan Erikson, in their recent book Vital Involvement in Old Age, come to similar conclusions. The Eriksons, both in their 80s, argue that old age is a distinctive stage in the life

cycle that brings with it a powerful sense of human interdependence and a need for generativity. By generativity, the Eriksons mean "taking care to pass on to the next generation what you've contributed to life," and to promote positive values in the next generations (*Erikson, Erikson, and Kivnick 1986; Goleman 1988*).

Another social factor contributing to the formation of understanding and connections between elders and at-risk youth is their mutual, marginal status in our society, standing outside the middle generation. Elders and at-risk youth are both what anthropologist Charles Harrington refers to as "disengaged" populations *(Harrington 1988)*. The older people know what it's like to be patronized, underestimated and discarded by society. This new marginal status reminds many elders of their youth. Gus recalls, "We seem to forget our young days--what we were doing. We never got caught."

The result is a growing empathy that inspires many mentors to become advocates on behalf of the youth. Their common status also seems to overcome great cultural differences, enabling the youth to see the elders as "just like them." Sometimes the images are absurd; one of the girls in Teen Moms described imagining her foster grandmother tooling around on a motorcycle--nevertheless, they make an important point.

Shared marginal status is one reason the elders are not perceived as authority figures by the youth. They are viewed by the young people almost as "emeritus" adults, as having succeeded and passed through adulthood, uncompromised by its trappings of authority and control. The result is a mix of respect and openness on the part of the youth. In fact the elders are often idealized by the young people; in describing Mary, Cindy said that "it seems like she's never wrong." Such is the faith that develops in many of these relationships.

It is often reciprocal. The youth are idealized by the older people, who come genuinely to believe in them, that they are good kids, full of potential. Although Cindy has been reported for child abuse in the past, Mary sees her ability as a parent: "She's a very good mother. It shows in the children. She's very attentive to the children." Emily Winston, despite Monique's poor performance in school, is convinced that "she's really quite bright." And Gus seems certain of the promise of youth in a general, all-encompassing way: "These kids, they're smarter than we are. I meet some kids, they've got brilliant minds." The missing ingredient in realizing their potential, he contends, is love, guidance and compassion from adults.

The youth could choose to accept or reject this confidence. The reason they accept it may be that they realize the older people are not just being nice. They genuinely enjoy being with the young person, and are spending the time not out of any sense of

altruism, but because it is satisfying. As a consequence of realizing that the elder's interest is genuine and personal, not just obligatory, the youth are much quicker to open up and trust. They also come to internalize the elder's enjoyment of their company. One young man reported thinking to himself, "If he [the elder] likes coming over so much, I must be okay." This dynamic also discourages dependency; both parties are getting a lot out of the exchange and neither side owes the other an unbalanced debt of thanks.

The positive cycle described above is set in motion by the benefits to elders through these programs. It is worth pointing out that while relatively little research exists determining the benefits of intergenerational programming for youth, virtually all studies of these initiatives have concluded that elders benefit enormously from the experience *(Saltz 1971, 1985; AARP 1987; Seck 1983; ACTION 1984)*. These findings were supported in unwavering testimony by the elders in the five programs studied here. According to Frances, "It was really fun. It's like helping a sick person get better because you can see this gradual change." Gus echoes this satisfaction in watching Eddie's improvement: "This kid was in bad, bad shape. Real bad shape. It took me all this time, but I fought and I fought--I made up my mind not to give up until he goes straight--but, Jesus, finally, he woke up."

While the elders might complain about the strain, they seem to like being pushed as well. One foster grandmother in Portland explained that she was quitting because several months of working with a succession of hard cases "had just been too much." Three months later, she was back in the fray, having taken a breather but not lost her appetite for working with young people.

There appears to be a group of older adults who not only thrive on this kind of challenge, but who prefer to work with adolescents. A large number of intergenerational programs match older people with small children and infants, and the success of these programs is widely accepted. However, the majority of the seniors interviewed as part of this study said they would much rather spend time with older youth. Frances Matthews said that she "can deal with a kid over 12, but I have a hard time dealing with anybody under that. . . . I don't know why."

All of this argues that there is something special about the intergenerational connection between elders and at-risk youth that extends well beyond the fact that elders are numerous, available and underused. Seniors appear to be preferred sources for these relationships, in many respects better suited than members of the middle generation, who are so often facing family responsibilities, the demands of the working world, and other competing responsibilities and commitments that work against taking on and aiding unrelated youth in need.

This is not meant to advance an image of aging as bringing perfect wisdom. To be sure, during the course of the research, numerous elders without such wisdom, empathy and a disposition for interdependence were encountered. In Joan Erikson's words, "Lots of old people don't get wise, but you don't get wise unless you age." This perspective accurately describes many of the elders studied. The social and psychological circumstances of aging contribute powerfully to drawing out instincts and abilities in mentoring young people that were simply not expressed at earlier stages of life. Some psychologists argue that the impulse toward empathy is a basic human trait, but one that we learned how to block as we grow up. It seems that many of the elders studied had learned how to "unblock" this impulse, and took great pleasure in its fulfillment.

Democratic Relationships

One of the most striking discoveries of this study was that the mentoring role may be one available not only to exceptional elders, but to a much wider group of older adults. In fact, most of the effective older mentors interviewed--the ones who were able to achieve primary relationships with the youth--were themselves individuals who not only had no prior experience in the mentoring role but were actually quite different from those we commonly think of as good mentors--"successful" people, leaders in the community, financially secure executives and other "good role models." Most mentoring programs tend to recruit these leaders.

In contrast, the elders who did particularly well in the five intergenerational programs studied were people like Gus Papageorge, Mary Dubois and Frances Matthews: Gus worked in a leather factory, drove a school bus, and was a barber over a long career of undistinguished positions; Frances was expelled from nursing school and spent her working days as a technician; and Mary held a string of unskilled jobs such as working cash registers and changing bed pans.

Not only were these individuals unexceptional in their working career, but many of them had personal difficulties. Gus confronted bouts of alcoholism and was drying out during the time of the interview. Sal DeRosa, another mentor at The Work Connection, lost his financial security to the bottle, and tells kids directly: "Don't make the same mistakes I made; do you think I want to have to work at the age of 70?" When Sal speaks, there is nothing abstract about his message.

The effective elders are more accurately described as survivors than as successes. And many are still fighting. The young people know this and respect them for it. These circumstances also engender in youth confidence that the elders "knew what they

were coming from and going through." They can curse with them about doing "shit work" and at the same time convey--in part through their own example--that it is worth going forward, trying hard and taking responsibility for oneself. They are excellent instructors in the skills of survival, and seem adept at imparting to the young people what one program director called "depression era values."

Many of these intergenerational initiatives are just as much programs for the older people as they are for youth--in many cases, these seniors could be declared at risk themselves. Their difficult experiences might well produce self-pity or a resentful attitude toward youth; instead the older people interviewed manifested a desire to help youth benefit from the elders' experience. The fact that they are experienced further serves to avoid any possible condescension and assures youth that the elders are on their side.

This ability to communicate is reinforced by a common class background. In most cases, the seniors were from lower-income and working-class circumstances, as were the youth. Even when there were racial differences, a shared class background seemed to constitute an important path of understanding.

The upper-middle-class elders interviewed tended to be concentrated in secondary relationships, and were much more reticent about getting involved in the lives of the youth. One mentor in the School Volunteers for Boston program, an insurance executive who was over 60, married and working, was willing to meet with a young black woman in his office once a month, but careful to draw the line: "I want to help, but I don't want to get too involved; I've got a lot of other concerns, and helping Donna is just one of them. . . . Once I participated in a program where some low-income kids from the inner city came and spent a week with my family during the summer. We all enjoyed it very much, but later their mother called us up--she was in a jam--and asked us for some money for the kids. It was very uncomfortable for us." The executive's decision is strongly reminiscent of Emily Winston's decision to limit her relationship with Monique.

The Elders' Role

The elders fill a special role in these programs, but no one knows what to call it. Participants fumble around for usable terms but end up falling back on conventional ones that only surround the concept, "friend, grandma, father." One teen calls her elder "the whole works."

The elders' role, in reality, is distinct from that of the young person's parents. The elder and youth have no history together, no complexities from the past; the expectations of the elder are far less complicated than parental expectations. They do not see

themselves reflected to the same degree in the young person, as the parents do. And the elder is not in an authoritative or disciplinary role the way parents, and many grandparents, are.

On the other side, the elder is not a social worker, supervisor, therapist, guidance counselor or teacher, although in the course of their relationship with the young person they may perform some of the same functions as these professionals. (For that matter they will also perform some of the same functions as parents.) In the case of the programs studied, the elders more often established themselves in contrast to seemingly punitive professionals: child protective workers, school disciplinarians and probation officers.

The elders' role is a nurturing and nonprofessional one, which comes to approximate that of extended family or caring neighbors. The seniors assume the trappings of "uncles" and "aunts"--in the way unrelated people close to a family sometimes come to bear these titles--and carry with them many of the advantages of these ties.

The nonprofessional elders treat the young person directly through their own life experience rather than through the perspective and practices of a professional discipline. They do not view the young person as one of numerous clients, or as a case to be managed. In studying disadvantaged children in Kauai, Emmy Werner found that "support from an informal network of kin and neighbors" was highly valued by her at-risk subjects, and that these non-family, nonprofessionals "surpassed parents and professionals in acceptability among the youth of Kauai" *(Werner 1982, p.104)*. The same appeared to be true in talking with the youth in the five intergenerational programs.

The point here is not that nonprofessional elders can replace professionals--or obviously, parents--but that they are afforded certain distinct opportunities to help youth by virtue of their role. Much of their access to youth has to do with being volunteers, a status that enables elders to take the position expressed by one of the mentors: "I tell the kids, I'm only here if you want me, and if you don't, just let me know so that I can move on to someone who does." The elders are not reluctant to remind the young people of this fact when they are especially resistant or fail to show up for an appointment.

Also of assistance to the elders in their mentor role is the fact that the new relationship offers both the older and younger person a fresh start and a chance to learn from a new relationship. This aspect is of special significance to the elders. Mary confessed: "I wish I could relax with my own children the way I can with these girls." And she recounted one experience of hanging up the phone on her daughter after a heated discussion, and getting calmly on the phone a few minutes later to help one

of the teenagers. Gus's divorce left him severed from contact with his daughter; Sam is not on speaking terms with his child. In both cases, these are painful separations for the senior. The intergenerational relationships offer a chance to start anew to the elders, as well as to the youth, who can escape some old patterns with parents, teachers and other adults in their lives.

The end result of all of these factors--the opportunity to be nurturing, freedom from authority, voluntary status and the chance for a fresh start--leave the elders in a superb position to fulfill the "Elder Function." It is an idealized role, redolent of the positive and useful self-conception they desire. This explains in large measure why the strong human needs of the elders do not seem to express themselves in dependence on the youth; it simply is not in the part.

PROGRAM FACTORS

Analysis of the relationships occurring in the five initiatives suggests that the raw material of participant readiness can be shaped fruitfully by intelligent programming, and program strategies seem to exert considerable influence on the formation and types of relationships that develop.

All five programs foster intergenerational relationships between elders and at-risk youth, and all are clearly exemplary initiatives. Teen Moms and The Work Connection appear particularly adept at the formation of primary bonds, while the T-LC and School Volunteers for Boston mentoring programs appear to produce a high percentage of secondary bonds. The Teenage Parent Alternative Program also produces some relationships, but emphasizes the creation of a stimulating group environment more than the development of one-on-one bonds.

Programs exercise their influence in two ways, through strengthening and supporting the elders' role, and through effectively bringing together the older adults and youth.

Supporting the Elders' Role

The programs support the elders' role by allowing them to function autonomously, making their mandate clear and providing appropriate staff and administrative support.

Autonomy. It would be easy for the programs to transform the elders into paraprofessionals by giving them a crash course and letting them handle a carefully prescribed set of low-level functions. However, at their most effective, these initiatives resist this impulse and protect the integrity of the non-professional role. In doing so, they emphasize getting good people and turning them loose. They also avoid overtraining the seniors and running the risk of dulling the elders' inherent good instincts.

Despite this latitude, the programs report that elders do not make the usual mistakes of relatively untrained nonprofessionals.

Mandate. While giving the elders autonomy is essential, this strategy is compromised unless the elders approach their work with the clear knowledge that youth development is the legitimate and proper objective of their efforts. As Greenberger and Steinberg point out: "Adults' stake in socializing nonfamilial adolescents depends on the degree to which they perceive themselves to be mentors to young people" *(Greenberger and Steinberg 1986, p.199)*. Programs can stimulate progress by making their developmental role clear to the elders from the outset. In all the primary relationships, the elder viewed their role principally as developing youth, and saw the focus as rightly being on the young person. In these cases, they used tasks as a route to intimacy.

In the cases of secondary relationships and acquaintanceships, the elder often ended up stopping with the structured tasks, focusing more on the tasks than on the youth. The Foster Grandmothers in TAPA, where there were mostly secondary relationships and acquaintanceships, were oriented toward child care, while the Foster Grandmothers in Teen Moms viewed the child as the context of the relationships. The issue seems to be whether elders view their proper role as getting through to the youth or hewing closely to the assignments at hand and contributing to the environment.

Support. The downside of freedom is that it puts pressure on the elders, especially given the difficulty of the task and their lack of experience. It can also be isolating, one of the problems the elders joined the program to escape. For both these reasons, success in providing support to the senior is essential.

The five initiatives handled support quite well, convening regular sessions that enabled seniors not only to commiserate and ventilate frustrations but to learn from each other. These convocations have an unanticipated function as well. Out of this contact comes another set of attachments--to each other and to the program staff--that contributes greatly to the elders' satisfaction and decision to remain with the program. A community of older participants forms around their shared interest in the youth and their common experience. The program staff help these bonds form, provide support and deal with seniors as collaborators.

The programs support the role of the elders in a few other ways as well. First, their status as independent nonprofits helps clarify for the youth that the seniors are not police officers or child protective staff, or are not in any way trying to check up on them. Second, they treat the elders as volunteers, even if they are paid. Teen Moms and TAPA both define their compensation of the elders as stipends. Third, the programs provide the older

adults a variety of youth with a variety of problems to work with. Each elder in The Work Connection, for example, has what is essentially a "portfolio" of youth. This helps keep the seniors from burning out from dealing with too many hard cases at once.

Making the Connection

The research suggests five important principles for programs that aim to encourage the development of significant intergenerational relationships: providing opportunities for one-on-one contact; bringing elders and youth together purposefully or around completion of meaningful tasks; having the pairs meet frequently and consistently for a sustained period of time; making an open-ended commitment; and meeting in an environment conducive to privacy and openness.

One on One. The first principle is the importance of forming relationships directly between the two individuals. An essential aspect of significant relationships is that the partners, particularly the youth, feel that they are special to the other person. It apparently does not matter to youth that the elder may be working with other young people, so long as they get their one-on-one time and attention when together. The youth jealously guard their time with the older person; one teenage mother said, "I look forward to Tuesdays. I know I get my time together with Cora, and it's all my time."

Conversely, the young mothers at TAPA encountered the Foster Grandmothers in a group environment, often sitting around a small classroom; while informal one-on-one contact was possible, anything beyond simple small talk--such as the formation of special attachments or intimacy--was noticeable to others and constituted a rejection of the group. One girl described it as rude. This problem reinforced cultural and racial differences between the grandmothers and girls and made it much more difficult for bonds to form. The lack of privacy, also, precluded talking about personal issues.

It is possible for significant relationships between youth and older adults to form in small group settings--as between individual members of a team and the team leader in a youth service corps--or even between teachers and students. However, these bonds, too, need some informal vehicle for logging private time together. There has to be an opportunity for the teacher to see the student after class, or for the team leader to catch up with one of the corpsmembers while walking back from work.

The most obvious drawback of direct one-on-one contact is that it increases program budgets. A group situation allows a program to place one elder with 10 or 15 youth, greatly reducing costs.

tial for a significant relationship. However, it is possible to match a single elder with five or more youth who are seen separately. Since seniors demonstrate great flexibility, express a preference to work with more than one student, and are either free or relatively inexpensive to employ, the budgetary issue may be minimized.

Purposeful. The second important principle is structuring contact around something of importance to both parties; it can't be artificial. Building or learning something together is the best example of this strategy, but actually any fairly clear purpose will suffice. The teenagers and older women in Teen Moms are brought together around the goal of preventing child abuse. The young girls are terrified about abusing their babies and view being a good parent as the most important goal in their lives; the older women also have a deep concern for the well-being of the child. This common purpose gives their meetings a goal, even if they end up dealing with child-raising methods only tangentially.

The participants in The Work Connection know they must succeed in the workforce, stay out of trouble and pay restitution or they will be forced to go to jail. The mentors themselves have had experience in the labor market, particularly with blue collar jobs, and they are dedicated to helping teach the young people how to navigate the difficulties of the labor market. This common purpose around something that the elder knows sets a foundation for a relationship built on mutual respect for the older person's skills. A similar dynamic is present at T-LC, where the mentors work with students around a project or tutoring, as do the volunteers at School Volunteers for Boston.

This structure is essential for getting beyond the superficial stereotypes; most participants enter these partnerships with discomfort and a distorted notion of the other. Addressing a specific task gives something for these disparate strangers to talk about at first. With purposeful activities to absorb initial nervous energy and provide a basis for conversation, the relationship can move through the superficial early stage and work toward another, deeper level of mutual understanding.

It is also particularly helpful if the tasks undertaken permit exchange rather than simply one-sided learning. This dynamic often occurs on an emotional level, since the contact meets the emotional needs of both elders and youth. However, the tangible meeting of needs is another way of avoiding a sense of dependency. For example, one mentor at The Work Connection takes a young person out for breakfast on the weekend; in return, the youth helps the elder fill up jugs of spring water. Such an arrangement allows both parties to feel equal in the alliance.

Often the elders and youth will get together when seniors provide a service, such as taking the youth to meet with a probation officer, or to a job interview. This may seem mundane, but if the youth doesn't know how to drive or has lost his or her license due to drunk driving, then the service really helps. It keeps the relationship from seeming contrived and provides a service the youth appreciates.

There is something of a noble lie operating in these programs: youth are told that the older person is there to give them tangible, not stigmatizing emotional support. The tasks are the focus around which the relationship can be forged, but these tasks are not simply a diversion; learning actually occurs through this structure.

Length, Frequency and Continuity. The third principle concerns the length, frequency and continuity of contact between participants. Although strict formulations are not possible and needs change over time, some basic rules can be advanced. Once-a-week contact appears to be enough as long as participants really get a chance to talk; once a month is insufficient. Closeness can be established in as quickly as three or four weeks with some youth, but most take two or three months to open up and feel trust.

Continuity and consistency are essential. Youth are as experienced with adults who let them down as they are with constant turmoil and erratic behavior. They desperately want a reliable adult figure. Young people want to know they can count on seeing their partner in a regular way, and also that they have the option to get in contact with the elder in case of emergency.

Open-Ended. The fourth principle guiding the formation of intergenerational relationships is that they be open-ended and not arbitrarily scheduled. The programs in which older people make a commitment to stay with youth "as long as they are wanted" seem to be most effective, even though the relationships rarely last for more than a year. The Work Connection doesn't give up on youth even if they fail in three or four jobs, as long as they keep trying. In T-LC, students may leave the Scarlett School to go on to high school, but they know the mentors will still be there at Scarlett.

Youth are very sensitive to this kind of genuine commitment. At one site for example, the participants and staff contrasted the intergenerational relationships with the relationships the young people formed with some local students in nursing college who came to counsel youth as part of a course. The teenagers knew these college students were not there with them beyond the confines of their semester, and were reluctant to make the investment that leads to a significant relationship. A similar experience was found by P/PV researchers evaluating the City University of New York (CUNY) mentoring program, where college students

taking a mentoring course were matched with youth, with mixed effect.

Environment. The actual setting where youth and elders connect appears to exert considerable influence on the type of relationship they develop. The most conducive environments avoid the inhibiting impersonal or public institutional settings, and allow for privacy and relaxation. Meeting on the youth's own territory is also helpful in focusing the relationship on meeting the youth's needs.

The classroom and the workplace appeared to be inhibiting environments for the development of a close intergenerational relationship. First, the schools and jobs where the youth were engaged tended to be sterile places where it was difficult to get privacy; conversing with the elder meant being singled out, and the youth did not seem to be able to easily slip out of their public postures and into more personal ones. The second problem is that one of the elders' chief assets is their status as outsiders, people the youth can talk with about the institutions. Focusing the contact at the institution compromises this status. (This criticism would not be valid for mentoring relationships between teachers and students, or between supervisors and apprentices, since the role of the mentors in this particular kind of relationship is as part of the institution.)

Sam Roth tutored David Jordan in a classroom at West Roxbury High School for a year, as Andy Stevens did with Lalime Vanethon at Scarlett Junior High School. David and Lalime both expressed great appreciation for the help rendered them by their tutors, but also frustration at not being able to get to know these retired individuals better as people. It simply wasn't possible surrounded by 40 other students, a teacher and four cinderblock walls. Sue Rachuba cited the same issue at the Lincoln Park Alternative School outside Detroit; while she liked Cora Perkins, she seemed more like a "special teacher" than a close friend or family member.

Rich Antonio expressed exactly the same sentiment at The Work Connection; while thankful for the interest mentor Joe Kline had taken in him, their only opportunity to talk was a few moments on break at his auto repair job. To get this time, Rich had to ask his boss for permission and then quickly duck outside the garage. Jim Cuthbertson always met Donna Royce in his Liberty Mutual Insurance Company office; not only was this setting unfamiliar and somewhat intimidating to Donna, it was also in the middle of a bustling office, with formal furniture, fluorescent lights and phones ringing.

Conversely, some programs and elders within programs are able to create environments that put the youth and elders at ease and insulate them from the pressures and concerns of outside institu-

tions. Sal DeRosa at The Work Connection met with his charges at their jobs once or twice a week, but he also arranged the meetings outside the workplace. He picks Jeff Richards up at the lumber yard where he works, and since Jeff lost his license for drunk driving and can't get around easily, drives him to and from his meeting with the probation officer. This way, Sal and Jeff get about an hour alone. They have some of their best talks on these rides, which tend to be well-timed since the meetings with the probation officer produce strong emotions on Jeff's part. During the week, Sal meets Bill Otto, another mentee, at the construction site where he works but on the weekends he takes Bill out for breakfast. Sal's case, in contrast with Joe Kline's, reveals how strategies in the same program can vary with differing effect.

The T-LC program in Ann Arbor is another example of how atmosphere can make a difference. Although housed in a school, T-LC has taken over a classroom it calls the mentor center. Rather than the usual cold rectangle with metal desks and blackboards, the mentor center has living room furniture, donuts and private spaces where youth and elders can get away from the institutional atmosphere. The center's location in the school seems to increase its power as an alternative environment, "an oasis," in the words of one student.

Perhaps the most effective environment for joining the older people and at-risk youth is the home of the young person. Obviously this arrangement allows less control than a setting designed and managed by the program's administration. Logistics can be difficult since there is no central location, transportation may be taxing for elders, and a broken appointment means a long trip for nothing. Furthermore, other influences like friends--particularly boyfriends of young mothers--and family can be present and disruptive. Another concern is that elders' safety can be jeopardized, and that they are more prone to be exploited under these circumstances.

Despite these difficulties, programs like Teen Moms and a number of efforts not included in this study--most notably the Little Sisters of the Assumption in East Harlem--have found that the in-home setting <u>can</u> be managed and offers an unparalleled incubator for closeness and primary relationships. The youth, particularly teenage mothers and young offenders who are maintaining their own household, feel that visits by the elders are part of their lives. For example, when Hazel visits Isabelle, they sit around the kitchen table and drink coffee together, then go to the park with the baby. All the bureaucratic trappings that can stymie genuine relationships quickly disappear.

DISCUSSION

The most important lesson from this study of the personal and programmatic characteristics of successful intergenerational relationships for at-risk youth is that success is neither magical nor obscure. Successful relationships derive from needs widespread among the elderly and disadvantaged youth populations, and can be influenced and encouraged by intelligent program strategies.

Elders are an enormous potential "workforce" for youth, and their value is magnified if they are engaged in a manner that draws on their talents fully. In forming attachments with youth, the role that elders assume in these programs is distinct from that of professionals and parents, and complementary to both. The additional, informal nurturance and support they provide the young people seem to reduce the burden on parents by meeting some of the youth's need for diverse forms of development and caregiving. (Research evidence shows a direct reduction in child abuse as the ratio of caregivers to children increases. By extrapolation, some of the same benefits to families and youth from increased support may be occurring here) *(Schorr 1988)*. Yet at the same time, the elders do not interfere in family matters or attempt to become surrogate parents or teachers.

The programs themselves similarly appear to walk a delicate path; they are able to engineer--or at least encourage--relationships without succumbing to the trappings of bureaucracy. Their restraint, flexibility and confidence in the elders, and sensitivity to the dictates of fostering genuine relationships enable them to maintain an important balance. And they often become mini-communities themselves by integrating elderly, youth and staff.

In response to the question posed at the outset, it appears that programs can fruitfully encourage the formation of intergenerational relationships. The five initiatives described in this study illustrate well the basic principles and specific measures that sophisticated initiatives have at their disposal.

VI. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This report was originated in the search for new resources and approaches to helping at-risk youth who, despite lively policy debate about their circumstances, appear to be slipping further and further away from integration into mainstream society. The report's focus is on the prospects of engaging older adults to help these young people, and on the promise of intergenerational relationships as a strategy for providing this assistance.

In an effort to learn more about these notions, five exemplary intergenerational programs operating around the country were studied during a one-year period. In particular, four questions were pursued: Will relationships form between elders and youth? What will these relationships look like? How will they benefit the young people? And why do they form?

FINDINGS

The study concluded with a sturdy appreciation of the potential of intergenerational relationships for at-risk youth. Specifically, we found that bonds between elders and youth will form. Despite a sharply age-segregated society and some initial hesitation, the participants were in most cases able to transcend the generation gap. Of the 47 pairings interviewed, 37 constituted significant relationships.

The significant relationships divided into two types, primary and secondary, the former characterized by attachments approximating kinship, great intimacy and a willingness on the part of elders to take on the youth's full range of problems and emotions. In secondary relationships, elders served as helpful, "friendly neighbors," focusing on positive reinforcement but maintaining more emotional distance.

Benefits from exposure to the elders appeared to exist for all youth, regardless of whether they participated in a significant relationship. However, youth in significant (primary and secondary) relationships consistently cited an improvement in the quality of their day-to-day lives and described learning a variety of functional skills as a result of their alliance with the older person. Young people in primary relationships reported a further tier of benefits. They described elders helping them weather potentially debilitating crises, bolstering their stability and sense of competence, acting as advocates on their behalf, and providing important access to the mainstream community. All in all, these relationships appear to help change the trajectory of the young peoples' lives, from one headed for failure, to a more adaptive path of survival.

It was further determined that these relationships did not occur simply by chance. There is a strong emotional basis--not only among the surveyed participants, but fairly widespread among elders and at-risk youth in this society--for the formation of bonds. Rather than being dependent on "chemistry," these alliances seem to occur more broadly because youth are receptive--lonely and desirous of adult contact--and elders are enthusiastic--also lonely and intent on returning to productive roles.

The elders interviewed described meeting their own needs precisely through providing the kind of attention, caring and commitment the youth craved. Beyond simply getting out of the house and earning money, relationships with youth offer elders the chance to pass on skills developed over a lifetime, get a fresh start in a relationship with a younger person, and play the appealing and somewhat idealized role of mentor. The role also provides the elders with a challenge: helping youth change their lives. They find the assignment sometimes frustrating, at other moments exhilarating and always engaging.

The considerable aptitude revealed by elders in alliance building with youth suggests attributes extending beyond need. In fact, the elders interviewed seemed especially well suited to the task. They felt a special empathy that appears to derive from the marginal status shared by elders and youth in our society. They also appeared to be attracted to fulfilling what one psychiatrist calls the "Elder Function": "the natural propensity of the old to share with the young the accumulated knowledge and experience they have collected" *(Butler 1973, p.24)*. All of this evidence contributes not to the apotheosis of elders as mentors--for the research also encountered a number of older adults bereft of the necessary skills--but rather to the following conclusions: there are not more good mentors in the aging population, but mentoring ability appears to be more easily expressed in the circumstances of old age.

This conclusion also helps explain one of the study's most striking findings. The most effective elders were individuals who had not lived what would commonly be considered "successful" lives. Many had endured strained family relationships, struggled at low paying jobs, and battled personal problems such as alcohol abuse. Partly as a result of surviving--and surmounting--such difficulties, these elders seemed to understand the youth, were able to communicate with them from their own experience, and to establish strong, constructive bonds. This observation does not support the prevailing conception of mentors as leading citizens, people who have succeeded financially and socially.

The elders' success with the young people appeared to be attributable not only to their social circumstances and native talent but to their unique role and to some deft programming decisions. Their location in an optimal spot--as neither parents nor profes-

sionals--left them free from role constraints and untainted by the mark of authority. In many cases, they came to assume roles not unlike favorite uncles and aunts.

At their most effective, the programs reinforced these natural advantages by casting the elders in nonprofessional roles, giving them freedom to do their work, providing ongoing support, and structuring contact with the young people so that it was personal, sustained and consistent. Intelligent adherence to these principles seemed critical in determining the prospects and strength of the relationships developed.

IMPLICATIONS OF THESE FINDINGS

The study's findings are richly suggestive of the possibilities inherent in the notion of intergenerational relationships for at-risk youth. Yet a number of important concerns remain, reminding us that our knowledge in this area is as limited as the programmatic landscape being studied. The intergenerational field of service to at-risk youth is truly in a pioneer state.

Most prominent among the concerns are the following: Will these relationships help the hardest to serve, or are they only viable in helping youth who are already well along in joining mainstream life? Will these efforts take hold in truly low-income urban neighborhoods, or are they best suited to working-class areas where the social fabric is more intact? Will these relationships produce longer-term impacts, or are good feelings over the short term all that can be expected? Will these outcomes be measurable in ways that will do them justice and help justify the expenditure of time and money on programming? And, will older people come forward in any numbers to aid at-risk youth, or is the relatively small size of the initiatives studied an important finding in and of itself?

Immediate responses to these concerns spring to mind, but they are incomplete. The fact is that fuller answers to these and other important questions simply remain unexplored. Our impetus to move forward to explore them is based on the promise of these early returns, and the fact that while intergenerational relationships do not singlehandedly offer to transform youth development efforts and eradicate urban poverty, this notion is one of the most interesting innovations to appear on the landscape in some time.

First, intergenerational relationships offer **a new role for older people**. From the perspective of elder productivity, the discovery that a variety of elders can help at-risk youth is of great importance. At present, older people have few choices. Many middle-class seniors escape to separatist playgrounds like Sun City, the retirement community Frances Fitzgerald describes in her book, Cities on a Hill; too many others of smaller means are

condemned to isolation, idleness and low-level work *(Fitzgerald 1987)*. Remaining in their communities and working with these young people is clearly a preferred option for a particular segment of the older population. The fact that some of the elders who need the additional income from this type of challenging work may also be well suited for working with disadvantaged young people is especially fortunate.

In sharp contrast to the theorized antipathy of the generations, it appears that the prospect of intergenerational relationships presents an enormous opportunity for double social utility. The five programs studied are at once programs for youth and programs for seniors, with both benefiting in equal measure. On the policy level, the experience of these programs supports the wisdom of expanding national service opportunities for seniors. Danzig and Szanton draw similar conclusions in their book National Service: What Would It Mean?: "Persons at or beyond the retirement age may have more to give and more reason to benefit from national service than any other age group" *(Danzig and Szanton 1986, p.273)*. The estimable history of the Foster Grandparent, School Volunteer and Big Brothers/Sisters programs offer well-developed examples of how such service opportunities might be designed.

Second, the activities of the five programs studied point to some **alternative directions for social intervention.** They show that it is possible to use unrelated, nonprofessional adults to intervene in the natural world of youth, a sphere usually considered the exclusive domain of friends and family. These programs aspire to do more than provide counseling, social support, role models or professional services; they attempt to seed genuine relationships, ones that in a significant proportion of cases take on the appearance of extended family. By using older adults from the community to fulfill these roles, they contribute to building what is essentially a self-help strategy. It is not surprising that these relationships often take on a life of their own beyond the walls and prescribed activities of the program. The elders give the young people their phone numbers, they take them out to dinner, get them jobs with their relatives, and open up social networks to the adolescents that were formerly closed to them.

In Vulnerable, But Invincible Emmy Werner writes: "In many situations, it may make better sense to strengthen available informal ties to kin and community than to introduce additional layers of bureaucracy into the delivery of social services, and it may be less costly as well" *(Werner 1982, p.162)*. Inherent in the relationships formed in the five programs is the prospect of social policies designed to strengthen, even reconstruct, the social fabric. There is considerable evidence to suggest that this fabric, woven out of informal networks of family and friends, is indispensable in coping with the stresses of life,

and further evidence that the destruction of this fabric in many low-income neighborhoods may be one of the root causes of poverty's persistence *(Block, Cloward, Ehrenreich and Piven 1987)*.

A third intriguing possibility suggested by the intergenerational relationships studied is that of **a distinct paradigm for youth development**, an approach that goes beyond the inculcation of academic and employment skills, the proliferation of computer-assisted instruction, and the emphasis on developing competencies so characteristic of many of our efforts to prepare at-risk young people for the world. Intensive personal relationships with adults are for the most part absent from social programs for youth, and the experience of the young people interviewed suggests that these intergenerational bonds may impart essential skills for surviving in a tumultuous world, where landing on one's feet and developing psychological and social maturity may be just as crucial to achieving long-term self-sufficiency as a firm grasp on the three R's.

These programs, by orchestrating relationships between at-risk youth and seniors, may be offering the young people a chance to acquire tools to develop future relationships with other adults. There is some evidence from other research that close developmental relationships with adults may be a common characteristic of resilient youth, youth from stressful backgrounds who succeed seemingly against all odds. Perhaps these intergenerational programs are offering participants access to resources and opportunities to develop the qualities of resilience that enable some of their peers to navigate successfully out of adverse conditions.

The programs studied offer many lessons for encouraging the development of intergenerational relationships, not the least of which is that it can be done. It is an operationally feasible goal. The models described in this report do not appear unduly complicated, are relatively inexpensive to institute, and may be applicable in a wide variety of settings and systems. Intergenerational programming is a notion with a potent set of natural advantages, and one that may make for appealing policy as well.

Despite this good news, the practice of forging relationships between elders and at-risk youth is by no means cut and dried. Programs attempting to pursue this approach will face a number of choices. Perhaps the most important is how much to emphasize the development of relationships within the program--especially in respect to other activities; should these bonds be accorded principal billing, or be treated as an additional component in a program focusing elsewhere? Should primary relationships be pursued, or should programs be content with encouraging any level of one-on-one contact between elders and youth?

Our review of a wider range of existing initiatives indicates that some are tempted to assume the language of relationships without actually working to develop these bonds. Contact is easier to orchestrate than commitment, and programs facing pressure to demonstrate short-term, concrete gains for youth may find themselves using older adults more to drill the young people in specific skills than as partners in significant relationships. Merely adding occasional adult contact to a conventional youth program will not produce the ties so vividly portrayed by Gus and Eddie, Frances and Steve, Emily and Monique and 34 other pairs of elders and youth interviewed for this study, and will likely not engage the enormous potential suggested by these cases.

The experience of the five initiatives argues that intergenerational relationships will not form with regularity unless they are taken seriously and accorded central programmatic importance. Similarly, this experience speaks eloquently for the special adeptness of elders in forming these bonds.

Beyond these core principles, a rich array of options is available to programs interested in fostering significant ties between elders and at-risk youth, and to researchers interested in better understanding the possibilities inherent in this strategy. However such activity might unfold, the lesson of this report is that intergenerational relationships for at-risk youth are a timely and potentially important new strategy for helping these young people. Further programmatic activity and research exploration appear fully justified.

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APPENDIX A
Programs Studied

IUE/The Work Connection
335 Central Street
Saugus, MA 01906-2398
Contact: Fran Gayron
617 231-1362

Teenage Parent Alternatives Program
Foster Grandparent Program
9851 Hamilton Avenue
Detroit, MI 48202
Contact: Genevieve Rakocy
313 883-2100

Teen Moms
Foster Grandparent Program
284 Danforth Street
Portland, ME 04102
Contact: Nat Shed
207 773-0202

T-LC Mentors Program
New Age, Inc.
1212 Roosevelt
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Contact: Carol Tice
313 663-9891

School Volunteers for Boston
25 West Street
Boston, MA 02111
Contact: Eleanor Swartz
617 451-6145

APPENDIX B
Experts Interviewed/Reviewers

William Bloomfield, Career Beginnings
Dale Blyth, American Medical Association
Lydia Bronte, Carnegie Corporation
Robert Burkhardt, San Francisco Conservation Corps
Gene Burns, Princeton University
Merrill Clark, Elder Works
Carmel-Acosta Cooper, Asociacion Nacional Pro Personas Mayores
Cathy Croft, Family Dynamics
Trudy Cross, Mott Foundation
Joan Dark, Oakland Youth Works
Martha Diepenbrock, Los Angeles Conservation Corps
Paul DiMaggio, Yale University
Jane Lee Eddy, Taconic Foundation
Irwin Flaxman, ERIC Clearinghouse, Columbia University
Tom Flood, Corporation for Public Management
Frank Furstenberg, University of Pennsylvania
Joseph Galbo, California State University-Stanislaus
Margaret Gatz, University of Southern California
Theresa Glennon, Education Law Center
Barbara Greenberg, Florence V. Burden Foundation
Charles Harrington, Teachers College, Columbia University
Hillary Hauptman, Project Joy
Nancy Henkin, Institute on Aging, Temple University
Alison Hirschel, Elderly Law Project
Rob Hollister, Swarthmore College
Harold Howe II, Harvard University
Jenny Keith, Swarthmore College
Frazierita Klasen, Pew Charitable Trusts
Henry Levin, Stanford Graduate School of Education
Joan Lipsitz, Lilly Endowment
Ron Ludin, United States Department of Labor
Margaret Mahoney, The Commonwealth Fund
Michael Marcus, Villers Foundation
Hayes Mizell, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
Harry R. Moody, Brookdale Center on Aging/Hunter College
Sondra Napell, Senior Tutors for Youth in Detention
David Nee, Ittleson Foundation
Elena Nightengale, Carnegie Corporation
Nancy Peterson, Consultant to youth conservation and service corps
Fran Pratt, Center for Understanding Aging
Bonnie Raleigh, Senior Community Service Program, St. Paul, MN
Essie Seck, University of Southern California
Mary Stamsted, RSVP
Sandra Sweeney, American Association of Retired Persons
Ruby Takanishi, Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development
Sam Taylor, Senior/Youth Partnership
Stephen Thomas, The Commonwealth Fund
Kathy Thorp, Wisconsin Positive Youth Development
Cathy Ventura-Merkle, National Council on the Aging

Joe Walsh, Koret Foundation
Emmy E. Werner, University of California at Davis
Charles Willie, Harvard University
John Woodbeck, National Institute for Sentencing Alternatives
L. M. Wright, National Council of Senior Citizens
Joan Wylie, Hancock Foundation
Diane Yamashiro-Omi, Koret Foundation
Robert Yin, COSMOS Corporation
Janet Zobel, National Urban League

Program Staff Interviewed

School Volunteers for Boston

Linda MacGregor
Joe McLean
Betsy Nelson
Ellie Swartz

Teenage Parent Alternatives Program

Cathy Gibson
Genevieve Rakocy
Nancy Walls

Teen Moms

Geri Anderson
Nat Shed

T-LC Mentors

Cathy Farber
Sam Mullice
Carol Tice

IUE/The Work Connection

Joe Capinigro
Peter DeCicco
Fran Gayron
Jack Petropolous
Kelly Quinlin
John Savage

APPENDIX C
Topic Guide

Questions for Older People[1]

Background: Age, race, gender, economic, jobs held, education, living situation (home, apartment or public housing). Family situation: married, widowed, divorced; kids, grandchildren; find out their feelings about this stuff.

How did they get involved in the program? Why did they get involved (altruism, personal)? What were they doing at the time? When did they get involved? Did they realize what it would be like? Much contact with young people in trouble before? Reaction of others? Would more older people be willing/able to do this if knew about it, were able to see what really like?

Activities: Who are the young people they work with? What do they do with the young people? Where do they meet, how long, what activities, what do they talk about, personal stuff, problems? What is their approach toward helping youth? What advice do they give the youth? Do they treat these kids different than their own children? Give them phone numbers? Get together beyond scheduled time? How involved do they get in their lives/attached do they become; how responsible do they feel for future of youth? Where do they draw the line? Will they plan to stay in touch after the program? Will they miss not seeing youth after the program ends?

Relationships: What kind of relationship develops? Parent/Child; friendship; counselor, etc.? Do they feel close to youth? How does this closeness develop? Do the youth trust them? How did this closeness and trust develop; any turning points? Do they understand the young people? Accept them? Enjoy them? Is it a mutual relationship?

How important is it for youth? What role do they play in the lives of youth? In the lives of parents; social workers; teachers; relatives; peers? What are the youth getting out of this? What percentage are they able to reach? In what ways? Why can they reach some and not others?

Benefits: What are they getting out of this work? What are they learning? Has their attitude toward youth changed? What role does this work play in life of older person? Do they enjoy the work? What are they getting out of it? Is it just a job? Any high points, low points?

What enables someone to be a good mentor/foster grandmother? What qualities? What experience? Is it something that can be taught/trained? How long are they planning to stay in the

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[1] "They" refers to older people in this questionnaire.

program? Any ways they'd change the program to make it more effective? Any frustrations?

Questions for Young People[2]

Background: Age, race, gender, socioeconomic, education, living situation, family situation.

How and when did they become involved with the program? What were they doing at the time? What were their first reactions to working with their mentor/foster grandmother? Much contact with older people beforehand?

Activities: Who is their mentor? When, how often, and for how long do they get together? What do they do together? What do they talk about? Any personal stuff? What kind of advice does the older person give them? Would they go to him or her with a crisis? Do they ever call them at home?

Relationship: What kind of relationship do they have? Like a relative, parent, friend, counselor, teacher, social worker, etc? How did it develop; any turning points? Do they feel close to the older person? How attached are they? Do you trust him/her? How did this trust develop? Does he or she understand them? Does he or she accept them? Listen to them? How involved in their life is the older person? How important is this relationship? Very important, somewhat important, not very important? As important as parent, best friend, social worker? Do they enjoy spending time together? Is it a mutual relationship? Do they think they'll stay in touch after the program is over?

Benefits: What are they getting out of this? How has the older person helped them? What are they learning? Has the older person helped them get through hard times? Has this relationship changed the way they view older people? The way they feel about themselves? Any high points so far; any low points?

What enables someone to be a good mentor/foster grandmother? What qualities about their mentor are important? About their experience? Any thoughts on whether working with elders is a good thing? Any ideas about how it might be made better?

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[2] In this questionnaire, "they" refers to young people.